

# Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is a condition in which some people experience a significant mood change when the seasons change. People with SAD experience mood changes and symptoms similar to depression. It may begin at any age, but it typically starts when a person is between the ages of 18 and 30.

## Causes

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAD is triggered by changes in seasons. This form of depression usually occurs during the fall and winter months when there is less sunlight and the days get shorter. SAD usually lifts during the spring and summer months.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of SAD can vary from mild to severe and can include many symptoms similar to major depression, such as:

- Sad, anxious, or empty feelings.
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy.
- Fatigue and decreased energy.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.
- Oversleeping and/or difficulty sleeping.
- Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates.
- Weight gain.
- Social withdrawal.
- Lack of appetite.
- Irritability and agitation.

## Treatment

SAD is more than just "winter blues." The symptoms can be distressing and overwhelming and can interfere with daily functioning. However, it can be treated. About 5% of adults in the U.S. experience SAD, and it typically lasts about 40% of the year.

If you feel you have symptoms of SAD or just want extra support during the fall and winter months, Seven Counties Services has compassionate and caring professionals ready to help. The journey for everyone is different, but our passion is to be with you every step of the way! To schedule a first appointment, call (502) 589-1100 or complete an online appointment request.



Seven Counties Services