

## Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: [Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca). You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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## Beat the winter blues

Many people are more sluggish in winter than in summer, but for those affected with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), the problem goes beyond getting a little gloomy. People who have SAD can experience: depressed mood, lack of motivation, fatigue, and often feel tired throughout the day. These symptoms can lead to excessive time in bed or in front of the TV, neglect of usual pleasurable activities, and reduced social contact.

### SAD mood boosters

If you are affected by SAD there are several simple steps you can take every day to brighten up both your body and mind, including:

- **Be active.** Building activity into your lifestyle not only helps lift negative feelings, it also prevents the weight gain associated with the illness. Being physically active relieves stress, builds energy, and increases both your physical and mental wellbeing and resilience. It is as easy as walking outside for 10-20 minutes each day.
- **Soak in the sun.** Getting in as much sunshine as possible during the winter months can help. Make sure blinds are open during the day, with a direct path to where you sit or work. Better yet, get outside in the sunshine whenever possible.
- **Choose healthy foods.** For energy throughout the day, eat three meals, and have healthy snacks between meals if you find yourself hungry. Choose foods from at least three to four food groups at meals and one to two food groups at snacks. For more healthy eating information visit [www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca)
- **Stay hydrated.** Carry a water bottle to make sure you drink enough fluid during the day. The amount of fluid you need depends on your age, gender, body size and activity level. Most adults need nine to -12 cups of water per day.



- **Cut down on alcohol and caffeine.** Caffeinated and alcoholic beverages disrupt your body's internal clock, resulting in a worsening of SAD symptoms. Try cutting down, or even cutting out, daily intake of these drinks that contain caffeine such as coffee, pop or energy drinks.

If you are concerned about your mental health or someone else's, contact: [Mental Health Help Line](#) toll-free at **1-877-303-2642** or Health Link at 811.