

IS THE END OF THE YEAR A SAD TIME?



For many people, the end of the year and its holidays are a joyful time filled with happy celebrations, gatherings and an overall sense of warmth and contentment.

But for others, it can be a time of sadness, anxiety, loneliness, pain and depression, often called the holiday blues or holiday depression. When those feelings last longer and are more intense, there's a chance it could be SAD, or Seasonal Affective Disorder.

HOW DO I KNOW IF IT'S SAD?

SAD	Holiday Blues
Lasts roughly 40% of the year	Starts in Nov. or Dec. fades in early Jan.
Increased appetite	Changes in appetite or weight
Increased irritability	Mild depression or irritability
Increased fatigue, sleeping more	Changes in sleep patterns, more tired
Social withdrawal	Difficulty concentrating
Increased sensitivity to rejection	Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
Feeling of heaviness in the arms or legs	Feeling tense, worried or anxious



[BCBSND.com](https://www.bcbnsd.com)

A regular sleep schedule can help you feel better



Whether it's SAD or the holiday blues, there are some easy, common steps you can take to feel better.

1. Create a schedule with regular eating and sleeping times and stick to it.
2. Move your body on the daily, outdoors when you can.
3. Manage your vitamin D levels with sunlight exposure and a healthy, vitamin-rich diet.
4. Avoid depressants like alcohol, which negatively affect your brain chemicals.
5. Try volunteering—it will help others and help you to feel better about yourself.
6. Create new traditions if the holidays bring up painful memories.
7. Remember, winter ends. Spring and longer, warmer days are coming!
8. Use the [BCBSND Wellness Online Therapy](#) to speak to someone about what you're feeling.

If you're still struggling, reach out to your primary care doctor for assistance with SAD, and utilize the BCBSND wellness tools, like online therapy, the digital wellness center and more to help you find a healthier, happier lifestyle.

Check out [our website](#) to learn more about the tools we offer. You'll find online therapy through Learn to Live (use the code **BLUEND** or your employer's custom company code). This program is offered at NO COST to those ages 13 and up enrolled in a BCBSND health plan. You will also find HealthyBlue, a digital wellness center equipped to assess your current health, offer tools to help manage conditions or to reach specific goals and much more.

Sources: National Institute of Health, Mayo Clinic, Anxiety & Depression Association of America



The monthly wellness topics are part of BlueElements—a health and wellness platform that encompasses six areas—physical, social, emotional, financial, professional and community.



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