

# Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

SAD can take a toll on your mental health with persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, a loss of interest in activities, and changes in sleep and appetite. For some, it can also show up as anger, irritability, or reckless behavior. If you've been feeling low, this quiz can help you see whether you may be experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder and help you develop a plan to feel better.

1. Have you experienced a persistent low mood or feeling of sadness?
  - A Yes, almost every day
  - B Occasionally, but not daily
  - C No, not really
2. Have you noticed changes in your energy levels?
  - A I feel tired or sluggish almost all the time
  - B My energy fluctuates but isn't consistently low
  - C My energy levels feel normal
3. Are you sleeping more than usual or struggling to wake up in the morning?
  - A Yes, I've been oversleeping and still feel tired
  - B Sometimes, but not all the time
  - C No, my sleep is normal
4. Do you find yourself craving sugary or carb-heavy foods?
  - A Yes, constantly
  - B Occasionally
  - C No, not at all
5. Have you lost interest in activities you typically enjoy?
  - A Yes, completely
  - B I've lost some interest but still enjoy a few things
  - C No, I still enjoy my usual activities
6. Have you been withdrawing socially or isolating yourself?
  - A Yes, I avoid social interactions
  - B Occasionally, but not all the time
  - C No, I'm still socializing as usual

**If you answered mostly "A"** — you may be experiencing symptoms of SAD and could benefit from support from Uprise or a licensed therapist.

**If you answered mostly "B"** — you might have mild symptoms of SAD.

**If you answered mostly "C"** — you likely aren't experiencing SAD.

## Proactive steps you can take

If you are experiencing strong symptoms of SAD:



**Premera** offers access to a large network of doctors, licensed therapists, counselors and substance abuse programs. Find a provider at [premera.com](https://premera.com) or call (800) 810-2583. Be sure to have your insurance card handy.



**Your Member Assistance Program** from **Uprise Health** can connect you to therapists, counselors, life management resources and more — all at no cost to you. Call (888) 695-2210 or visit [members.uprisehealth.com](https://members.uprisehealth.com) and register with access code: NWPPMAP.

If you are experiencing mild to medium symptoms of SAD:



### **LIGHT THERAPY**

Counteract winter darkness by bringing more light into your life. Use a light box (also called a light therapy lamp) that provides bright, full-spectrum light for 20–30 minutes each morning. Awaken to light with a bedroom light on a timer, or a dawn simulator lamp.



### **GET OUTSIDE**

Even on a cloudy day, spending 30 minutes outside each day before dark can do wonders. Try a daily walk regardless of weather.



### **EXERCISE REGULARLY**

Moving your body—whether you walk, jog, cycle, do yoga or workout at a gym — releases mood-boosting brain chemicals and helps you feel better.



### **PREPARE FOR WINTER STRESS**

If you know that dark days, cold temperatures, or holidays tend to increase your stress, plan ahead to build in more time. Also take a few days off to go somewhere warm, or just wrap yourself in warmth with an electric blanket, hot beverages, wool socks, or sitting by a fire.



### **STAY CONNECTED**

Make an effort to spend time with friends and family, either in person, through calls, or video chats.



### **PRIORITIZE SLEEP**

Maintain consistent sleep patterns by setting regular wake-up and bedtime schedules. To combat fall and winter fatigue, limit or avoid napping and oversleeping.



### **EAT A BALANCED DIET**

Carbohydrate-rich foods such as bread, pasta and sweets, can lead to a feeling of lethargy, food cravings, mood swings, and possible weight gain. Know that winter increases carb cravings and supplement your diet with protein-dense meals.



### **TAKE A MULTIVITAMIN**

If you don't already, consider taking a daily multivitamin, especially in the winter months. Also consider taking vitamin D while the sunlight is low.

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Taking proactive steps with simple lifestyle changes may help you manage feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Even if you have low to no symptoms, you could still benefit by taking these steps to stay on top of your mental health.