

# Shining Some Light on Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

## What SAD Is & What SAD Isn't



### What SAD Is

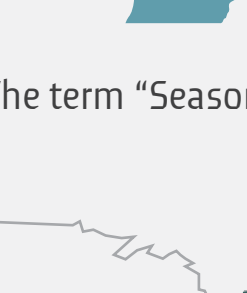
A form of depression associated with late autumn and winter, thought to be caused by a lack of light.

SAD is estimated to affect **10 million** Americans.



Another **1 to 2 million** of Americans may have a mild form of SAD.

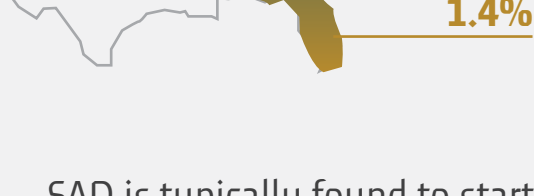
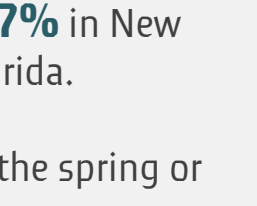
That means **1 in every 30** people in the U.S. suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder.



That's about the entire population of Michigan.

That's even **5x** the amount of people that were diagnosed with cancer last year.

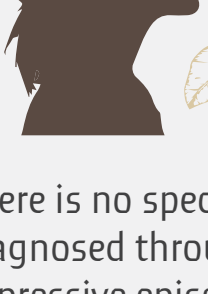
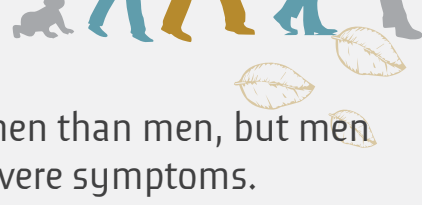
The term "Seasonal Affective Disorder" first surfaced in **1985**.



More common the farther North you live. Prevalence ranges from **9.7%** in New Hampshire to **1.4%** in Florida.

It can cause depression in the spring or early summer, but is rare.

SAD is typically found to start at around **age 20**.



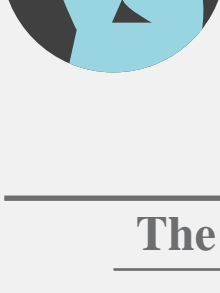
SAD is more common in women than men, but men typically display the most severe symptoms.

**60-90%** of sufferers of SAD are women.

There is no specific diagnostic test for SAD; it is diagnosed through a patient's history of seasonal depressive episodes.



SAD has been observed to run in families, meaning that there is likely a genetic aspect to its appearance.



Researchers believe that the effect SAD has on the brain are a result of a lack of exposure to light.

Other factors such as low vitamin D levels in the blood are also associated with SAD.



### The SAD Link to Other Psychological Disorders

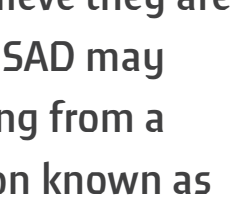
**55%** of SAD sufferers reported a close relative with a severe depressive disorder.



**34%** reported a close relative abusing alcohol.

### What SAD Isn't - Common Myths

Anyone experiencing a lack of energy or other negative changes associated with a change in seasons is suffering from SAD.



#### Did You Know?

Psychologists have also suggested that some people may experience symptoms because they associate the autumn and winter seasons with things such as a traumatic event, or a history of having to limit activity because of weather.

People who believe they are suffering from SAD may only be suffering from a milder condition known as the winter blues, which is usually treatable by increasing physical activity.

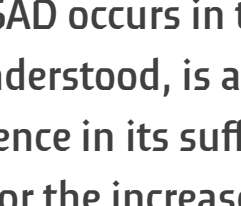
SAD means that you **ONLY** experience depression seasonally. In order to be diagnosed a sufferer must have had depressive episodes during the last two consecutive winters. Seasonal depressive episodes must outnumber non-depressive seasons in one's lifetime.



#### Did You Know?

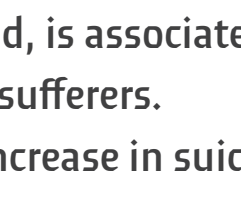
SAD is a recognized depressive psychological condition which can negatively impact sufferers' lives.

SAD only occurs in the winter.



A less common variety of SAD occurs in the Summer and, for reasons that aren't well understood, is associated with episodes of mania and extreme violence in its sufferers. It is also a possible cause for the increase in suicides that typically coincides with the arrival of spring.

SAD sufferers are sad the entire winter.



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Phototherapy is the cure for SAD and has no side effects.



Light therapy is not invasive, but that does not mean it is a perfect solution for SAD sufferers, or that it has no side effects

Side effects are typically temporary and include:

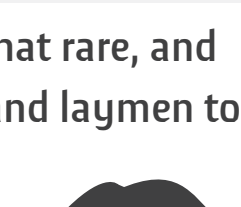
HEADACHES

EYESTRAIN

NAUSEA

INSOMNIA

Everyone gets down during the winter. Seasonal Affective Disorder is a farce!



True cases of seasonal affective disorder are somewhat rare, and the difficulty of diagnosing it has led both experts and laymen to declare that it is not a real disease.

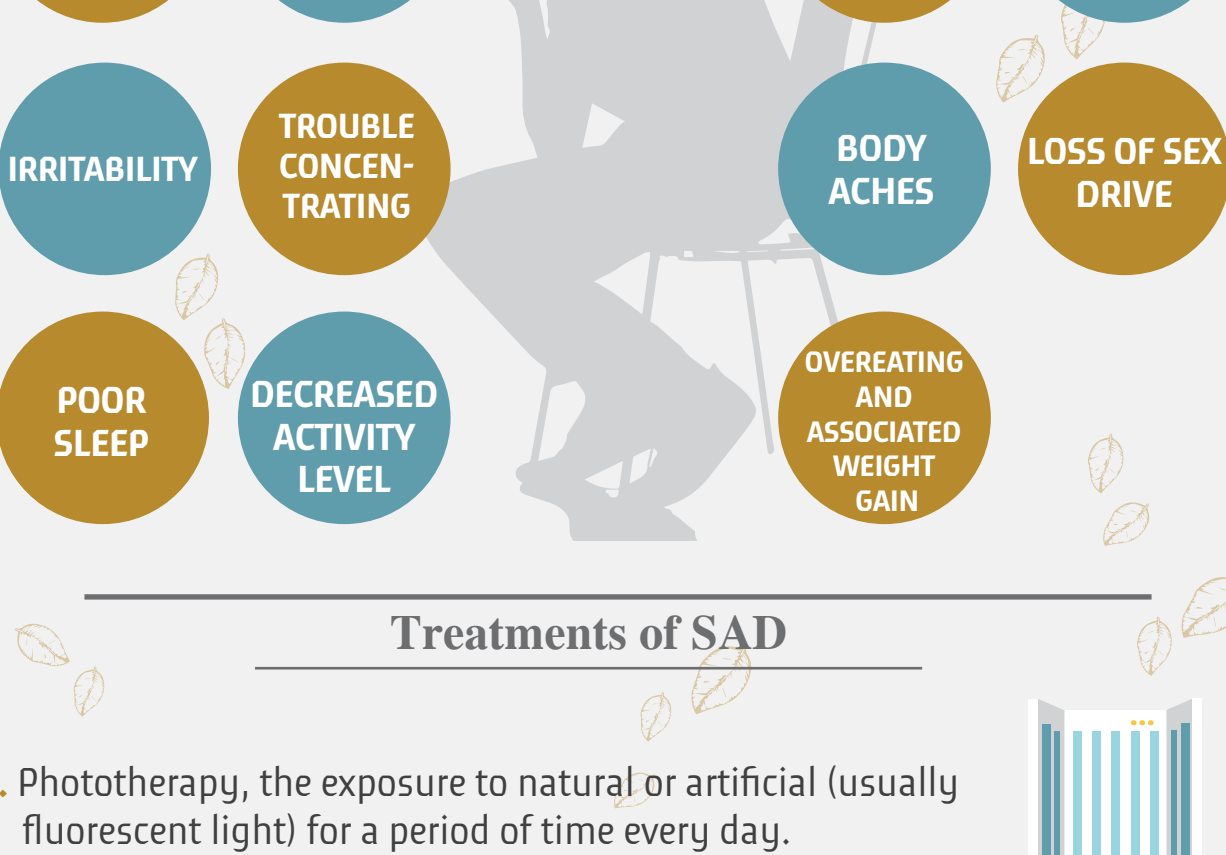
Seasonal Affective Disorder is a serious depressive condition which is recognized as a legitimate mental disorder by a number of associations for various types of medical professionals.



Part of the reason for a lack of diagnoses is the social stigma of having depressive conditions that many believe are fake or not as severe as they truly are. This can lead to people suffering from SAD and not wanting to speak with professionals or take other steps that may help them.

### Symptoms and Treatments

#### Symptoms of SAD



#### Treatments of SAD

**1.** Phototherapy, the exposure to natural or artificial (usually fluorescent light) for a period of time every day. **80%** of SAD sufferers benefit from phototherapy, and show improvement within **2-4 days** of beginning treatment.



**2.** Temporary or permanent relocation to a more hospitable climate.



**3.** Therapy



Sources:

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