



**Alberta Health
Services**



What are the “winter blues” or seasonal affective disorder?

Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD occurs in up to 17% of people, and often is seen in more than 1 family member. It is a type of depression that usually happens in the colder months, when the days are shorter.

Winter blues impacts about 15% of Canadians and involves a lower mood or waves of emotions in the colder months.

These tend to be more common in adults, but can still show up in children and youth. If you see signs in yourself or your children, speak to a healthcare provider.

MORE RESOURCES

www.healthychildren.org

www.albertahealthservices.ca (parent information series)

www.mindful.org (mindfulness for kids)



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Ways to combat “winter blues”

If you notice your children have lower moods in the winter, there are some strategies that may help:

- Open curtains and allow natural light in your space
- Spend time outdoors and get fresh air
- Get regular exercise and eat healthy food
- Talk to a doctor or a therapist
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about vitamin D supplements
- Help your child understand what increases their stress and how they can better manage it

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Ways to combat “winter blues” as a family

- Watch a funny show or movie together; make a night of it!
- Put on your favourite music and have a dance party
- Make a winter bucket list, come up with some activities the whole family is interested in
- Try new recipes
- Create new family traditions
- Have conversations and check in with each other if you notice any changes in behaviour

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Stress Busters

Stress can impact your overall mood and well-being. If you notice yours or your children's moods are fluctuating in the cold winter months, you may need to take extra special care. This could include things like:

- Deep breathing strategies
- “Mindful crafts” or “stress reduction crafts for kids”
- Mindfulness strategies like focusing on your 5 senses (5 things you see, 4 things you touch, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, 1 think you taste)

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