

Coping Tips

Try these suggestions to help manage your feelings of depression during and after the holidays:

- **Talk to a professional.** If the blues you are feeling linger for several weeks and are interfering with your ability to enjoy life and function effectively, seek help. A therapist can assist you in exploring your feelings.
- **Find support in others.** Try confiding in trusted family members and friends about how you have been feeling. Be honest with others about what you are experiencing instead of covering up your emotions. An understanding loved one can give you the strength and support you need to help cope with depressive feelings.
- **Manage your stress.** Learn effective ways to reduce your stress and anxiety, which may minimize your feelings of depression.
- **Exercise regularly.** Regular fitness activities can improve your mood and boost your self-esteem. Talk to your doctor about an exercise program that is right for you. Because a lack of sunlight may be contributing to your depression, exercise outdoors for a double benefit.
- **Eat right.** Discipline yourself not to overeat. Avoid junk foods and environments that may encourage bingeing. Stick to a nutritionally balanced diet. Avoid alcohol, which is a depressant.
- **Get the proper amount of sleep.** Experts recommend at least seven to eight hours a night. Resist the urge to oversleep, and try to maintain a regular sleeping schedule.
- **Make more time for recreational, fun activities.** Try to spend more time outdoors, especially on sunny days.
- **Be more social.** Stay in touch with friends and family.
- **Consider using a light box.** These devices have been used successfully to treat SAD. Talk with your doctor or therapist about whether the increased amount of light could be helpful to you.
- **Educate yourself.** Learn all you can about depression, support groups in your area and ways to manage your feelings.

Do not let feelings of depression and sadness control your life. Get help to manage your symptoms. Learn to feel comfortable talking about your difficult emotions. Take care of your mind and body by giving it the food, rest and activity it needs. Do not be afraid to treat yourself to the things you enjoy more often. Aim to get out of the funk you may be feeling and to experience life to the fullest.

Resources

- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Institutes of Health (NIH): <http://health.nih.gov>
- Mental Health America: www.nmha.org