Winter Blues (and Snooze) [1]

Week of:
Jan 18, 2019

Seasonal depression and light therapy? [2]

Hi Alice,

I am concerned that I have that seasonal depression thing — SAD (I wish I knew what that acronym stands for). I have heard that light therapy is a legitimate option. This seems to be consistent with what I have read about melatonin and its possible connection to serotonin, a chemical associated with depression. Is it true that more melatonin can mean less depression and anxiety?

If I do have SAD, during the winter can I just go to a tanning parlor as opposed to a more expensive light therapy clinic? Are UV tanning parlors really more expensive/dangerous than suntanning on the beach? What about clinical light therapy stations? (Yes, I don't know their official name). I realize that it is summer now, but after last winter, which was truly traumatic for me, I want to come up with a plan for next winter well in advance.

—Guy who needs a really dark tan bad

Read more [2]

How to find a therapist [3]

Dear Alice,
I am trying to find a therapist. I have to go in-network for my health insurance to cover it, so I have this long list of therapists, but I don't know anything about them. Do you have any suggestions as to how to go about choosing one and/or questions to ask? Is there a "Go Ask Alice!" answer I could read for this info? I found my last therapist through the recommendation of a colleague at work and another through my school's counseling service. Now I need to spread my wings and find a professional therapist on my own! Yikes!

Thanks for any help you can give me!!!!!!!!!!

Can't wake up in the winter

Alice,

I have always been a poor "getter-upper" in the mornings, but lately I haven't even awakened when the alarm goes off. I just sleep right through it and wake up at around noon. I have been missing classes regularly and it's very distressing! I haven't been going to bed any later (I go to sleep at around 2:30 or 3 AM and have since the beginning of school and I used to wake up at around ten for my class). I haven't been eating or exercising differently. Could this be a result of the shift in weather or in the clocks? Does it take time for the body to adjust to the new season?

— Sleepyhead

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)?

Alice,

Every winter, especially when the days are short, I feel tired, depressed, and unproductive. Then the spring comes and I start feeling myself again. Is this just a normal seasonal cycle? I've heard about SAD, Seasonal Affective Disorder, but don't know much about it.

— Melancholy Baby

Therapy's working, but I don't always feel like going

Dear Alice,

I've been going to therapy for some time now for general anxiety and obsessive tendencies,
since about October last year. My question is do people always want to go to therapy or is it normal sometimes to feel like "ugh, I don't feel like going/care to go tomorrow" like if it's more a burden or a... "Nuisance" than anything else. I can confidently say it's been helping me! But why do I feel like that sometimes? Is it normal? Shouldn't I know that I need it. That it's good for me?

Read more [6]