



SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

Autumn has begun and the days are becoming shorter. For some of us, this is a wonderful time – leaves are starting to change colour, Christmas is drawing ever closer and we can enjoy those cosy nights in. However, many of us struggle at this time of year, and don't find the cooler weather or shorter days as enjoyable as others. Those of us who experience this may have a condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD. SAD is defined as 'a depressive illness caused by shortened daylight hours and a lack of sunlight' by The Seasonal Affective Disorder Association. Around 21% of the UK population experience some of the symptoms of SAD. It can be more commonly known as 'Winter Blues'.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP WITH THE SYMPTOMS OF SAD?

The NHS suggest trying a few techniques to help treat SAD, such as the following:

- Try to get as much natural sunlight as possible. A lunchtime walk can be very beneficial, and at Blythe Valley there are numerous walks around the lovely country park that you can do – download some of our walking routes on the 'Relax, Play, Active' section of the BVP website. <http://www.blythevalleypark.co.uk/about/relax-play-active/>
- Try and make your home and work environments as light and airy as possible – having plants in the office can help make your working environment more 'airy'. See which plants are best at oxygenating the air by reading our Biophilia article on the BVP website. <http://www.blythevalleypark.co.uk/wp-content/themes/blythe-valley/lib/pdfs/BVP-Wellness-at-work-Biophilia.pdf>
- Regular exercise is really important for helping symptoms of depression – Virgin Gym is on your doorstep at BVP, or even try some running routes around the country park?
- A healthy, balanced diet can help with the symptoms of SAD – take a look at some of healthy recipes on the BVP website - <http://www.blythevalleypark.co.uk/wp-content/themes/blythe-valley/lib/pdfs/Blythe-Valley-Park-healthy-eating-week.pdf>

Keep a look out in the next few weeks for more articles on ways to get you through the 'winter blues'.

REFERENCES:

http://www.sada.org.uk/what_is_sad_2.php

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/pages/treatment.aspx>

