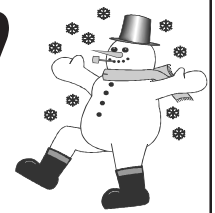




# Your Health



A newsletter dedicated to student health issues  
at Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Winter 2004

## Are you feeling SAD?

Winter has returned with its accompanying grey skies, shortened days, and the almost instinctive desire for some to hibernate. The return of winter also brings feelings of depression for many. The type of depression that follows the seasons, Seasonal Affective Disorder (also called SAD), usually begins in late fall or early winter and ends with the return of sunnier, longer days in the spring. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, as many as 6 out of every 100 people in the United States may have winter depression, with women and those living in northern geographic regions (like Minnesota) affected more than others. Common symptoms of SAD include:

- Weight gain
- Change in appetite, especially a craving for sweet or starchy foods
- A heavy feeling in the arms or leg
- A drop in energy level
- A tendency to oversleep
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased sensitivity of social rejection
- Avoidance of social situations
- Lowered interest in sex



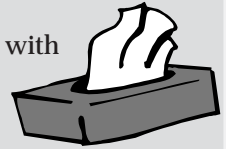
Researchers feel SAD is the body's reaction to a lack of "seeing the sun." Complex mechanisms linked to the amount of light that reaches the eye are affected. Increased darkness seems to upset the production and balance of body chemicals that influence mood, sleep patterns, body temperature, libido and more. Research also shows that many with SAD experience a reduction in symptoms with exposure to bright, artificial light from a fluorescent light box. Light boxes, which are used at home, can be purchased from several companies and are available with different intensities. The usual "dose" of light from a light box is 10,000 lux. Lux is a measurement of light intensity and a typical sunny day gives you 50,000 lux. Commercially purchased light boxes ensure the proper kind of light as well as filters to screen out UV rays that can damage the eyes. This is important because the light has to enter the eye. Absorbing light through the skin, the kind of exposure that happens in a tanning bed, has not been found to be beneficial in the treatment of Seasonal Affective Disorder. In fact, exposing the retina to the type of light in tanning beds can damage the eyes (not to mention the skin!) and tanners are strongly encouraged to wear goggles to block that particular kind of light. Other treatments for SAD include antidepressant medication, counseling, exercise, and simply spending more time outside. Those with SAD can best benefit from a diagnosis and treatment plan by working with a health care provider. For more information about Seasonal Affective Disorder, the following resources are available:

- +Winter Blues: Seasonal Affective Disorder - What it is and How to Overcome It, by Dr. Norman Rosenthal. Guilford Press, 1998.
- +National Organization for Seasonal Affective Disorder: [www.nosad.org](http://www.nosad.org)
- +National Institute of Mental Health: [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

## Cover Your Cough!

Are you doing your part to stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick? A recent campaign by the Minnesota Department of Health, the Minnesota Antibiotic Resistance Collaborative, and the Association of Professionals in Infection Control offers the following simple guidelines to help us all keep our germs to ourselves:

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; or, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands. Throw the used tissue in a waste basket.

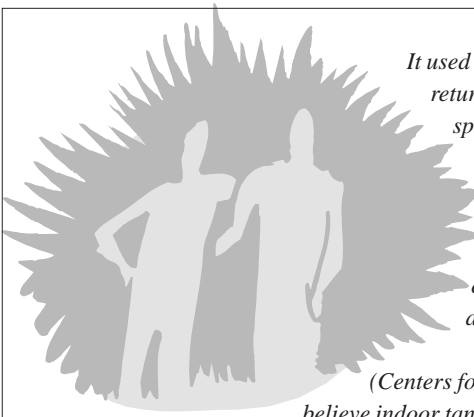


After coughing or sneezing always clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner. Other tips for stopping the spread of germs include:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Don't share eating utensils, drinking glasses, pop/water bottles, cigarettes, or other personal items.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Consider getting vaccinated against influenza.

Happy New Year

- **The traditional time for making (and breaking!) New Year's resolutions has come and gone but it's never too late to resolve to make healthier life choices. If you are struggling to keep your resolutions or want to make some today, the web site, [how-to-keep-your-new-year-resolutions.com](http://how-to-keep-your-new-year-resolutions.com) offers some tips to help you be successful:**
- **★ Don't try everything at once. You'll have better luck fulfilling one or two goals than you will with a list of fifty.**
- **★ Word it Carefully. Instead of resolving, "This year I'm going to relax" try to make it sound a little gentler: "This year I'm going to explore different ways of relaxing."**
- **★ Make a Plan. Once you know what your resolution is, try to break it down into manageable chunks.**
- **★ Write it Down. Write down your resolution and plan of action and stick it up in a place where it will be a constant reminder.**



**Indoor Tanning**

*It used to be that if someone living in Minnesota had a tan in the winter it was because they had just returned from a vacation in a more tropical location. Today it usually means that the “bronzed body” spent time at a tanning salon. Despite health warnings from the federal government and the American Academy of Dermatology, a “fake bake” is very popular, especially among teenage girls and young women. Research conducted by the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and University Hospitals of Cleveland shows 30 to 40 percent of 16- to 18-year old white females use tanning booths repeatedly. The American Academy of Dermatology estimates that on an average day in the United States, more than a million people spend time visiting a tanning salon.*

*But is indoor tanning safe? The answer depends on who you believe. The Federal government (Centers for Disease Control, the Federal Trade Commission) and the American Academy of Dermatology believe indoor tanning to be dangerous:*

- ~The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently listed exposure to UV radiation from the sun, sunlamps, and sunbeds as a “known human carcinogen” in the National Toxicology Program’s Ninth Report on Carcinogens 2000. Basal cell, squamous cell and melanoma are types of cancer that have been linked to exposure from UVA and UVB rays.*
- ~Scientific research shows that exposure to UVA rays (the type of ultraviolet light most often used in tanning beds and booths) penetrates deep into the skin and can weaken the skin’s inner connective tissue. This weakening results in premature aging of the skin and wrinkles.*
- ~UVA rays can damage the retina of the eye. The Food and Drug Administration requires all tanning salons to tell all customers to wear protective eye gear.*
- ~Exposure to ultraviolet rays when taking certain medications can cause health problems. Medications like birth control pills, antihistamines, and tranquilizers can cause the skin to be more sensitive to light, causing a sunburn type reaction.*

*Indoor tanning facility operators think that tanning in moderation can actually be healthy:*

- ~A study funded by the Indoor Tanning Association and conducted by Dr. Michael Holick, director of the General Clinical Research Center at the Boston University School of Medicine, shows a link between adequate UV ray exposure and the body’s ability to produce a necessary nutrient, Vitamin D. Vitamin D deficiency plays a role in osteoporosis and other bone disorders and diseases. Some preliminary research also shows Vitamin D may have a protective factor against certain types of cancer.*
- ~A tan is the body’s defense mechanism against a more serious injury to the skin, a sunburn. Blistering sunburns, especially in childhood and teen years, are linked to skin cancer. The Indoor Tanning Association believes smart, sensible tanning to avoid burning is healthier.*

*The Federal Trade Commission offers some tips for protecting yourself if you choose to use indoor tanning facilities.*

- 1. Limit your exposure to avoid sunburn. Set a timer on the tanning devise that automatically shuts off the lights.*
- 2. Use goggles to protect your eyes. Make sure they fit snugly. Check to see that the goggles are sanitized after each use or, better yet, buy your own.*
- 3. Your medical history might make indoor tanning more dangerous. If you have lupus, diabetes, are susceptible to cold sores, or have a medical condition that is aggravated by heat or exposure to light, indoor tanning is probably not recommended.*

*Newer technology has made it possible to look tan without spending any time in the sun or a tanning salon. Self-tanning products that contain an ingredient known as dihydroxyacetone (DHA), interact with the outermost layer of the skin to produce a color change. The tan can be applied in a salon by a professional with an air-brush type applicator or self-tanning lotions can be applied at home. For a more natural looking tan when using DHA, avoid over-applying around the elbows, knees, feet, hands and face. Keep in mind if you choose to use a sunless tanner that it does not provide protection from the sun and you will still need to avoid sunburn by using sunscreen. The FDA also warns that self-tanning products that contain ingredients other than DHA may not be safe.*

**English Muffin Pizza**

**Prep Time: 15 minutes; Cooking Time: 10 minutes; Serving Size: 6**

- Ingredients:**
- 6 English muffins, split in half
  - 14 ounces pizza sauce
  - 12 ounces pepperoni, sliced
  - 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
  - sliced black olives



**Directions:** Preheat oven to 400° F. Line a baking pan or baking sheet with aluminum foil. Arrange muffin halves in baking pan and spread 2 to 3 tablespoons pizza sauce on each. Cover with pepperoni slices. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and olives. Bake for ten minutes or until cheese is bubbly. Serve hot. For a meatless version, try leftover veggies!

Recipe source: [www.getouttoday.com](http://www.getouttoday.com)

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