



wellnews

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ASK THE EXPERT

Seasonal Affective Disorder

by Samantha Douglas, MS

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that returns around the same time every year. This typically happens in late fall or early winter when there is less sunlight as the days get shorter. This can happen in the spring and summer months, but is less common. Doctors believe less sunlight during certain times of the year will trigger your body to change the way it makes and uses key brain chemicals: Melatonin and Serotonin. Fewer daylight hours can raise levels of melatonin (which can increase sleepiness and lethargy) and lower level of serotonin (which can bring about feelings of depression and sadness and may also affect appetite).



Talk to your doctor if you start to notice changes that don't go away for days or weeks at a time. Some symptoms include feeling depressed most of the day, low energy, changes in weight or appetite, and oversleeping. It is important to take symptoms seriously to help prevent them from getting worse. Treatments are available and can include medication, light therapy, or talk therapy.

There are ways to help manage your symptoms on your own. Eat a balanced diet of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and limit sugar intake. Keep your sleep on schedule to maintain an even mood. Spend time with loved ones or friends who understand what you're going through. Exercise or dance! Physical activity can relieve stress and anxiety which both increase SAD symptoms. Also, if possible, take a winter vacation in sunny, warm locations if experiencing winter SAD, and to cooler locations if you have summer SAD.

Kokomo School Corporation, Employee Health & Wellness Center

Clinic Hours

Monday:	6:30a – 1:00p
Tuesday:	12noon – 6:00p
Wednesday:	closed
Thursday:	12noon – 6:00p
Friday:	6:30a – 1:00p

3507 S. Reed Road,
Kokomo, IN 46902
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765.776.5300



FITNESS

Let's Learn About Barre!

by Chris Garrity, MS, ACE Personal Trainer

If you are seeking to release the ballet dancer within for a low impact workout while increasing muscle tone and flexibility, then Barre may be the right choice for you. It was first created in 1959 by a professional ballet dancer while rehabilitating her own lower back. Since that time, this exercise format has exploded into many variations and for nearly any fitness level.

The main benefits of Barre include improvements to posture, balance which can reduce the risk of falls, endurance, flexibility, and can aid in weight management. The combination of multiple aspects of fitness, including aerobic, strength, and flexibility makes Barre a dynamic form of activity that can serve people of many ages, shapes, and abilities. Muscle toning is focused on primarily the lower body and mid-section, although some workouts incorporate resistance tools to enhance upper body strength, such as light hand weights, elastic bands, and balls.

Barre workouts blend concepts from ballet, yoga and Pilates to give a unique exercise experience. Many movements are focused on short ranges of motion to increase body control and core engagement. If you are trying Barre for the first time, be patient because some of the ballet movements take time to learn. However, many beginner classes and videos are available.

A ballet bar is used in studio classes, but a chair can be used at home. Ranges of motion and positions may be modified if uncomfortable, especially to the knees, so individuals can enjoy the class with a few adjustments.

Classes can be taken in studios, such as Pure Barre, the Barre Code, and other fitness centers. For those wanting to exercise at home, it can be livestreamed or viewed later via online videos. Search for "virtual barre" to see a list of options.

Barre has an intrigue for many people who danced at one point in their lives or for someone who has always wanted to try. It can be part of a complete fitness program and a fun way to give yours a little elevation.



NUTRITION

Are Liquid Calories Sabotaging Your Weight Loss?

by Jessica Robertson, MA, RD, CD

INFUSED WATER RECIPES

Stay hydrated with these infused water combinations inspired by Culinary Hill. You can float the ingredients freely in water or use an infusion pitcher. Infused water is best 2-4 hours after you've made it.

INGREDIENTS:

FOR ALL OPTIONS:

5 cups water
1 cup ice cubes

1. STRAWBERRY, BASIL AND LEMON:

½ cup strawberries, stemmed and sliced, fresh or frozen
5 large basil leaves, torn
1 lemon, thinly sliced

2. HONEYDEW, CUCUMBER, AND MINT:

½ cup Honeydew cubes
1 cucumber, thinly sliced
10 fresh mint leaves, torn

3. MANGO, RASPBERRY, AND GINGER:

1 mango, peeled and cubed
½ pint raspberries
1 (2 inch) piece of ginger, peeled, thinly sliced

4. BLUEBERRY, LEMON, AND ROSEMARY:

½ pint blueberries
1 lemon, thinly sliced
4 sprigs fresh rosemary

DIRECTIONS:

- In a large pitcher, place the desired combination of fruit and/or herbs. Add ice and fill container with water.

Nutritional Information —

Serves: 4

Calories: 22	Carbohydrate: 6.4g
Protein: 0.7g	Fat: 0.2g
Fiber: 2g	Sodium: 1.3mg

One of the most common mistakes we see when someone is trying to dial in their nutrition is drinking (vs. eating) their calories. While those flavored beverages at your local coffee shop may taste awesome, unfortunately, they're often filled with extra calories that give you little—if any—nutritional value. For instance, a 16oz. café mocha



from Starbucks contains 360 calories. If you're on a 2,000 calorie per day diet, that's close to 20% of your total caloric intake from ONE drink!

Along those same lines, soda and flavored recovery drinks like Gatorade often contain anywhere from 150-250 calories per drink, almost all of which come from sugar.

But let's look beyond simple caloric intake and think about what you're actually getting from these beverages. Liquid calories are typically not filling, so in the end, you end up eating more calories as a result. Furthermore, these beverages have little to no nutritional value. They're not filled with high-quality proteins, healthy fats, complex carbohydrates, or macro/micronutrients, so you're consuming calories that are giving you almost no return on your investment.

If your goal is to build a healthy and sustainable nutrition program, think long and hard the next time you consume liquid calories. Chances are, they're not going to fit into your program!



STRESS AND MINDFULNESS

The Importance of Socializing

by Carla Ficorilli, MS

As human beings, we learn, grow, and work as part of society. We are social animals by nature, so we tend to function better when we're in a community and around others. Even the most introverted among us crave social contact from time to time.

Face-to-face contact triggers parts of our nervous system that releases a cocktail of neurotransmitters; and like a vaccine, they protect us now and in the future. Socially active individuals can handle stress better, have a decreased risk of type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure. Connecting with friends may also boost your brain health and lower your risk of dementia because many social activities also provide cognitive engagement or physical exercise. Some ideas include:

- Taking a class at your local recreation center, library, or university.
- Attending religious services.
- Volunteering with your favorite charity.
- Playing a sport like golf, tennis, or even walking with a friend

When you're socializing, your mind is occupied with "real thoughts." You are not left alone with your thoughts, obsessing about the past, or worrying about the future. You are living in the moment.

Experts warn to watch out for excessive screen time because it restructures brain matter, which can affect the brain's ability to communicate and results in generally poorer cognitive performance. Unfortunately, we're becoming more virtual and gadget dependent.

There are many reasons to seek out social opportunities. Whether you're meeting a friend for coffee, walking with a friend in the park or participating in a group volunteer activity, socialization is an important part of your overall health. The benefits of regular social engagement can manifest in a myriad of ways. So get out, meet people, and see how direct interactions and socializing can change your worldview and your overall wellbeing.

You can now get information from your health coach through social media!

Click the links below:

