

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Seasonal affective disorder or SAD is a type of depression that occurs during the same season each year. SAD may be caused by lack of sunlight and is sometimes called winter depression. Lack of sunlight can upset your "biological clock".

Symptoms include:

- **Feeling sad, moody, or anxious**
- **Losing interest in your usual activities**
- **Eating and craving more carbohydrates**
- **Gaining weight**
- **Sleeping more but still feel tired**
- **Having trouble concentrating**

These symptoms come and go about the same time each year.

Light therapy is the main treatment. It is usually prescribed for 30 minutes to 2 hours per day. Most people feel better within a week and should continue treatment until the season changes.

Heart Failure



So what is heart failure? No, it doesn't mean your heart stops. It just doesn't work as well as it should. With heart failure, the heart muscle walls weaken and can't pump enough blood and oxygen to your body. As a result, the kidneys may cause the body to retain fluid.

Heart failure can be caused by many conditions that damage the heart. It could be high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, a heart attack, a birth defect, or lung disease. Obesity, diabetes, and sleep apnea have been linked to it as well.

You may not have any symptoms or the symptoms can range from mild to severe. Symptoms can include:

- Shortness of breath is one of the first things you may notice. This can occur after activity or can happen when you are lying down or sleeping.
- Fatigue is caused by the hearts inability to pump blood efficiently to your vital organs. This makes your arms and legs feel weak and you may feel tired just walking across a room.
- Coughing and wheezing can occur when fluid backs up into the lungs. A cough can sometimes produce pink tinged mucus.
- Swelling and weight gain happens when the kidneys are unable to get rid of salt and water because of less blood flow. This causes more fluid to stay in your tissues.
- Nausea and loss of appetite.
- Rapid and irregular heartbeats. The heart has to beat faster to pump enough blood to the body.

You can lower your risk of developing heart failure by:

- Healthy eating
- Regular exercise
- Not smoking
- Losing weight if you are overweight
- Taking medications as prescribed

There is usually no cure for heart failure, but it can be treated. With the right care, heart failure may not stop you from doing the things you enjoy.

It's up to YOU to take your medications, make dietary changes, live a healthy lifestyle and keep follow-up doctor's appointments!

HOLIDAY STRESS

If you are feeling irritable, rushed, resentful, lonely, or overwhelmed, keep these strategies in mind:

*Do what you can

*Take your time, plan ahead

*Set a budget

*Get creative

*Expect the time crunch

*Beat the procrastination bug

*Create new traditions

*Get enough sleep

*Exercise

*Stay in control of our eating

*Learn from the past

*Focus on positives

*Laugh, dance, sing

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Laughter IS the Best Medicine

The sound of laughter is contagious. Nothing works faster than a good laugh to bring your mind and body back into balance. When laughter is shared, it brings people together and increases happiness. Laughter also triggers healthy physical changes in the body. The good feeling you get from laughter remains with you even after the laughter subsides. **The health benefits of laughter:**

- It reduces stress hormones in the body and increases immune cells and infection fighting antibodies giving you an overall sense of well-being.
- It can lower blood pressure and protect you from a heart attack.
- It improves alertness, creativity and memory.
- It helps the body produce natural pain killers.
- It helps you get through tough situations and enables you to relax, stay focused and accomplish more.

One thing that helps us laugh is not taking ourselves too seriously. The ability to laugh, play and have fun not only makes life more enjoyable but also helps you solve problems, connect with others, and be more creative.

Ways to help yourself see the lighter side of life:

- Laugh at yourself
- Look for the humor in a bad situation
- Keep reminders around you to "lighten up"
- Keep things in perspective

Charlie Chaplin once said "a day without laughter is a day wasted."

Creamy Spinach Feta Dip

10.5 oz frozen chopped spinach ½ C fat free yogurt ½ C reduced fat sour cream
½ C fat-free feta cheese 1 tsp minced garlic 2 tsp dried parsley or dill
½ tsp black pepper 6 whole-wheat pitas quartered

Cook spinach according to package directions and drain. Press with fork to drain completely. Combine all ingredients and mix well. Refrigerate 1 hour and serve with pita slices.

Nutritional Analysis per Serving		Servings: 6	
Calories	64	Cholesterol	8.2mg
Protein	5.5g	Sodium	207mg
Carbohydrates	5.5g	Fiber	1.5g
Total fat	2.7g	Potassium	129mg
Saturated fat	1.5g	Sugar	2.2g