

The winter blues are a wave of low emotions that come with these cold, dark days.

If you're experiencing the winter blues, you might feel the need to sleep a bit longer, indulge more often in comfort food, and spend more time with Netflix than with your friends and family.

You may have heard people referring to this as seasonal affective disorder (SAD), but the winter blues and SAD are two different things.

The difference between the winter blues and seasonal affective disorder:

About 15% of people in Canada experience the winter blues, while only about 2-3% of people in Canada experience SAD.[\[1\]](#)

SAD is a widely researched condition of regularly occurring depression in the winter season[\[2\]](#) that can impair one's daily life. Treatment can include light therapy, counselling, medication, or a combination of the three. A professional can help determine if you are experiencing SAD.

Here are some ways you can improve or maintain your mood this winter:

1. Let the light in

Get outside during the day if you can, keep your curtains open, and when indoors, spend as much time as you can near the windows. Even if it's cloudy, getting some daylight can help boost your mood.

2. Get physical

Even though hitting the gym might be the last thing you feel like doing, physical activity is always a great tool to help you manage your mental health. Start small and try a lunchtime walk around the block.

3. Try to keep a normal sleep schedule

It might feel like your bed is the only one who understands this funk you're in but over-sleeping can actually worsen the symptoms of the winter blues.

4. Give yourself a pat on the back – you're doing great.

Battling low moods is no easy feat, and it's important to be kind to yourself. You're stronger than you think!

Remember to have regular check-ins with yourself, and to spend that extra time on self-care if you need to.

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association: <https://cmha.ca/blogs/winter-blues-101>

Vitamin D

Canadian's don't get much sunshine in the winter months, which is our main source of Vitamin D.

You can get vitamin D through supplements, and fortified foods such as: cow's milk and margarine fortified with vitamin D. Goat's milk, certain soy beverages, cheese, yogurt and orange juice are also often fortified. Foods that naturally contain the nutrient are limited to fatty fish, such as salmon or tuna, and egg yolks.

According to Health Canada, the recommended daily allowance for vitamin D differs based on age, and for pregnant or lactating individuals. Check with your doctor to see how much vitamin D you should be taking.

Source: <https://globalnews.ca/news/3954605/vitamin-d-canada-winter-food-supplements/>