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Banish the Winter Blues

The winter season is a time for slowing down, sleeping longer and reflecting. However, many people find their mood going down and staying there. If this starts to interfere with your life, you may have **Seasonal Affective Disorder**.

The symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) include:

- * Depression with the onset of fall or winter
- * Lack of energy
- * Decreased interest in work or significant activities
- * Increased appetite with weight gain
- * Carbohydrate cravings
- * Increased sleep and excessive daytime sleepiness
- * Social withdrawal
- * Afternoon slumps with decreased energy and concentration
- * Slow, sluggish, lethargic movement



In Wisconsin, the rates of SAD are higher, as we find SAD becomes more prevalent the further we get from the equator. **Exposure to the sun plays an important role in our brain chemistry.** Scientists have found the

brain chemistry related to our sleep/wake cycles becomes out of balance in Seasonal Affective Disorder.

M.D.s will often prescribe drugs such as Prozac (an SSRI) to balance out this chemistry.

Instead of using drugs, Naturopathic medicine aims to restore this brain chemical balance by using exercise, diet, UV-light therapy,

plants such as St. Johns Wort and hormones such as melatonin.

Spend twenty minutes sitting in front of concentrated UV light in the early morning to begin to balance out your brain chemistry naturally.

Dr. Allison Becker, Janesville, WI

Cure a Cold While You Sleep: Warming Socks

Hydrotherapy is one of the greatest tools you can use in your own home for nearly any illness. Warming Socks is an easy, cost-effective way of stimulating your body's immune system and bringing about relaxation as you fall asleep. This efficient tool rapidly improves conditions such as colds, earaches, sore throats, nasal con-

gestion and sinus infections.

All you need is a pair of 90% cotton socks and a pair of 90% wool socks. Before going to bed, soak the foot part of the cotton socks in cold tap water and wring them out thoroughly. Put on the cold wet socks, then the dry wool socks over them.

Once you have the socks in place, jump into bed and keep

yourself covered (especially feet) throughout the night. Your body will instantly begin warming the socks as your blood and lymph circulate. Congestion can be relieved within 30 minutes to allow for easier sleep. Wake up feeling refreshed & revitalized!

*Alicia Birr,
ND Student, Portland, OR*

Lose Fat While Resting

Researchers are discovering how to encourage fat loss with certain types of exercise. Until recently, researchers studied whether a person was burning calories from fat, carbohydrate, or protein during exercise. Now they are watching which fuel is used after exercise while at rest after exercise, which has changed the story for optimal exercise prescriptions.

Most of us are familiar with the standard minimum exercise regimen:

30-45 minutes of cardio in the aerobic heart zone 3-4 times per week plus interval-style weight training 2-3 times per week. The calories burned during this exercise come from both fat and carbohydrate, but stop once the exerciser stops. Remember the reasons for this regimen are many; aerobic conditioning, cardiovascular disease protection, bone strength, lean muscle mass maintenance, weight maintenance, flexibility, agility to reduce falls, and stress management, to name a few. However, if the immediate goal is to reduce body fat, or if there are exercise limitations such as from chronic disease, obesity, or time constraints, **try the anaerobic technique.**

Competitive athletes are familiar with 'going anaerobic' to improve performance. And now cardiac patients are familiar with 'going anaerobic' to help rehabilitate the heart muscle after surgery. It turns out, 'going anaerobic' also improves the ratio of calories burned from fat instead of from carbohydrates or necessary muscle proteins, and most of the fat burned is the 24-hour period following the exercise – hence, lose fat while resting.

Here's how to do it: (note-this is safer and easier with a heart-rate monitor)

20 minutes of anaerobic exercise 3 times per week.

Anaerobic heart rate zone = 85-92% of max heart rate.

'Do it until you can't, rest until you can, repeat' for 20 minutes.

Choose exercises that help to reach the anaerobic heart zone the quickest and that are easy on joints, such as stairs, aerodyne bike, or dancing. Exercises that use both upper and lower extremities are best. Make sure your doctor approves before starting any heart-challenging exercise program.

Dr. Jill Evenson, Janesville, WI



Spicy Stewed Pears

Spicy stewed pears **benefits the lungs** and is perfect for fighting off and treating colds in the winter season.

Medicinal Action: This recipe features the herb powdered ginger. This herb **warms the digestion and clears phlegm** from the lungs. Pears nourish the lung tissue and are used especially to quell a dry cough.

Maple syrup is rich in **zinc** and **manganese**, nutrients which will also bolster the immune system and ward off winter illness.



3 whole pears, sliced in half and cored
 ½ cup water
 1 Tablespoon ground ginger
 1 Tablespoon of pure maple syrup

Preheat oven to 375°. Place sliced and cored pears, skin side up, in a glass dish. Mix water, herbs and maple syrup. Pour this mixture over the pears. Bake uncovered for 18-25 minutes until pears are soft.

Firmer pears such as Bosc are best for baking & grilling

Dr. Allison Becker, Janesville, WI

Questioning the Safety of Plastics

The debate continues, in our own discussions and in the media...are plastics safe? The answer will depend upon the source from where you gather information. Whether or not they are safe, they are becoming ubiquitous in our every day lives.

Polyvinyl chloride, also known as PVC, is now replacing metal piping in plumbing. It is also being used to replace many other building materials, and it is also found in clothing and upholstery.

Phthalates are used to soften vinyl and plastic. They are found in many products including air fresheners, nail polish, cosmetics, many body and baby care products, many perfumes, shower curtains, IV bags to give drugs, and soft plastic toys.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is present in polycarbonate plastics, which can be found almost anywhere, including the harder plastic bottles, DVDs, CDs, coating for teeth to prevent decay, and the smooth inner lining of canned foods. BPA leeches out when plastic is scratched, cloudy, exhibits signs of wear, micro waved, and when exposed to heat.

Websites to Learn More

www.scorecard.org

Find out information on pollutants prevalent in your zip code & which companies are releasing them.

www.ewg.org

The Environmental Working Group will bring you the latest news & research in environmental medicine as well as information on public policy.

<http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/enviro.html>

The National Library of Science has a searchable database and thorough profile of toxins.

National Public Radio (www.npr.org) has a host of interviews on their archived talk shows 'Day to Day' and 'Science Friday' that speak about the topic of safety of plastics. One show discusses the benefits of using a water filter on your kitchen sink to obtain "safer" drinking water, rather than drinking bottled water that is stored in plastic.

*Dr. Robin DiPasquale,
Madison, WI*

How to Lower your Exposure to Plastics

Become informed, and begin to limit the amount of plastics used in your life.

- Safer plastics to use are polyethylene (# 1, #2, and # 4), and polypropylene (#5). Avoid polycarbonate (#3) and polystyrene (#6).
- Never heat or microwave in plastic. Do not leave food or drink in plastic containers where they will heat up and release their toxins.
- Avoid using cling wrap, especially when microwaving. Choose other options to store and heat food and drinks.
- Above all, educate yourself and those in your community with reliable and credible information so more people can make safer, healthier choices.



Phthalates

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Calendula: A Multi-Purpose Flower

The bright yellow and orange color of the flowers of *Calendula officinalis*, also known as pot **marigold**, can bring a little bit of sunshine into winter, as well as addressing many health concerns. The dried flowers, included in tea blends, can **lift the spirits**. The slight bitter taste can **stimulate digestion**. The mildly estrogenic action can **assist in regulating the menstrual cycle**. The medicine of calendula can modulate inflammation, as well as assisting in **detoxification** through the lymph system.

External application as a skin remedy, however, is the most notable use of calendula. The flowers can be made into an infusion by pouring 1 cup of boiling water over 3 Tbsp. dried calendula flowers. This can be used to wash cuts and wounds by acting as an **anti-septic and encouraging more rapid healing**.

Calendula oil can be used topically to moisturize red and inflamed skin including **diaper rash, dry eczema, minor burns and sunburns, fungal infections and hemorrhoids**.



To Make Calendula Oil

Infused oil can easily be made by filling a jar with dried calendula flowers, cover them with olive oil, shake them daily for two weeks, strain the oil from the flowers, and store in a jar in the refrigerator.

This infused calendula oil can be made into a salve, which allows for easy application and storage. The salve can be used in the same ways as mentioned above for the infused oil.

Calendula Salve Recipe

- Pour 1 cup calendula oil into a double boiler on the top of the stove.
- Add 1/4 cup beeswax to the oil and allow to melt completely.
- To check the consistency of your salve, dip a metal spoon in the mixture, place in the freezer for a few minutes, scrape off and apply to the skin on the back of your hand. If too soft, add more wax. If too hard, add more oil.
- Remove from the heat and pour into small glass or tin containers. Allow to sit until solidified before putting on the lids and storing.

Dr. Robin DiPasquale, Madison, WI

To receive the **WNPA Quarterly** by email, please contact **Dr. Crystal Urban** at dr.crystalurban@verizon.net