**Treatment and Coping Strategies for Winter Depression**

Each year thousands of people’s lives change. The sky grows darker and the air gets colder. As the days shorten, their mood sinks. Depression sets in. It’s a condition commonly known as SAD.

It’s quite different from the common winter blues. Winter depression can be severe and it can alter your life. If you suffer from winter depression, take heart. There are treatments. You can manage your winter depression and have a better season.

**Winter Depression Causes**

Winter depression is commonly caused by the hormone levels changing. You might be surprised to know that while winter depression is most commonly associated with SAD, others can suffer from spring and summer depression too. When the hormone levels like serotonin and melatonin drop, depression can set in.

Depression is most common during the winter months because of the sun’s effect on hormone levels. Scientists and the medical community believe they’ve uncovered one of the answers to this mystery - Vitamin D.

The sun’s rays help your body produce vitamin D. It’s a vitamin that is essential for physical and mental health. Unfortunately, it’s not a vitamin that exists in many foods and it’s not stored in your body. You need sun exposure to create it. Or you may need to take a supplement. Most people around the country are deficient in vitamin D.

During the winter months when the sun’s rays are not strong and people tend to stay inside where it’s warm, you can become significantly deficient in Vitamin D. Other hormone levels can drop as well. All of this combines to cause winter depression.

**Winter Depression Treatments and Coping Strategies**

There are many things you can do on your own to manage winter depression. You can:

* Get outside when the weather permits and get fresh air and sunshine – 20 to 30 minutes.
* Take a vitamin D supplement.
* Eat foods rich in vitamin D, B, folate and omega fatty acids.
* Exercise - this raises your hormone levels and releases endorphins which elevate mood. It also helps you sleep better. This affects your hormones positively too.
* Make sure you spend time daily with people you love and enjoy being with. Friends and family make a difference.
* Do something that makes you laugh. For example, take a dance class. Learn something new.
* Take daily walks.
* Pamper yourself with aromatherapy, light therapy and cheerful surroundings.

If your winter depression lasts more than a few days or you find it’s getting worse, it’s time to see your doctor. Winter depression can be serious.

Your physician can prescribe light therapy, medication and other changes to help you beat depression. You don’t have to suffer. These treatments and coping strategies when combined with a doctor’s diagnosis and recommendations can help you enjoy this winter and live your life to its fullest.