

December 2025

Wellness NEWSLETTER

HEALTH OBSERVANCE

SAD Awareness Month

Wellworks For You

As the days grow shorter and colder, many people notice their energy and mood shifting. For some, these changes go beyond the “winter blues” and signal a more serious concern: Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Recognized as a form of depression, SAD often appears during the late fall and winter months when sunlight is scarce.

Why It Matters

SAD impacts both mental and physical wellbeing. Symptoms may include:

- Low energy and persistent fatigue
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Understanding SAD is important because it not only affects daily life but can also make it harder to stay on track with health goals, relationships, and work responsibilities.

Bright Ideas to Support Your Wellbeing

The good news? There are practical ways to help combat the effects of SAD:

- Seek natural light: Spend time outdoors during daylight hours, even on cloudy days.
- Stay active: Movement releases endorphins and helps regulate sleep and mood.
- Create a routine: Consistent sleep and meal times can bring balance during darker months.
- Consider light therapy: Special lamps designed for SAD can help mimic natural sunlight.
- Talk it out: Counseling or health coaching can provide support and strategies.

Did You Know?

SAD affects about 5% of adults in the U.S. each year, with symptoms typically lasting 40% of the year. Women are four times more likely to be diagnosed than men.

What's Next?

If you've noticed shifts in your mood as the seasons change, you don't have to navigate it alone. Reach out to your healthcare provider or take advantage of wellness resources available through your program. Even small steps—like stepping outside for a walk or joining a wellness challenge—can make a meaningful difference in brightening your season.

Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20364651>



2 BUILDING AN ACCESSIBLE WORLD

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

This day highlights the importance of accessibility, equity, and inclusion in all areas of life.



3 MINDFUL CELEBRATIONS

Finding Joy and Emotional Balance

The holiday season is a time for joy, but its busyness can often feel overwhelming.



4 Featured Recipe

CONNECTEDNESS
HEALTH TIP CORNER

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Dawn Koch - Wellworks For You

Annually, December 3 is recognized as International Day of Persons with Disabilities by the World Health Organization. Today, the world population is approximately 8 billion people, and an estimated 1.3 billion people, or approximately 16 per cent of the world's population, live with some form of disability. A disability is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses or activities.

As a legal term, the ADA defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

The incidence of disabilities varies across different demographics, with men, women, and children each experiencing different patterns and prevalence rates. Here are some key statistics:



Men

The percentage of non-institutionalized males or females with any disability across all ages, races, and education levels in the United States was 13.5% in 2023.



Women

Disability was more commonly reported by women, with various types of disabilities being more prevalent among them.



Children

The percentage of children with a disability in the United States increased from 3.9% in 2008 to 4.3% in 2019. The most common type of disability among children 5 years and older in 2019 was cognitive difficulty.

Evidence and experience show that when barriers to their inclusion are removed and persons with disabilities are empowered to participate fully in societal life, their entire community benefits. Barriers faced by persons with disabilities are, therefore, a detriment to society, and accessibility is necessary to achieve progress and development for all. On this day, we reaffirm our commitment to inclusion and accessibility for all. Let us continue to build a world where everyone—regardless of ability—can thrive, contribute, and belong. Together, we can turn awareness into meaningful action.

Source: <https://www.who.int/campaigns/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities>

Mindful Celebrations

Finding Joy and Emotional Balance Amidst the Festivities

Caitlyn Keenan – Wellworks For You



The holidays are often a stressful time. Finances, gift giving, and busy schedules overwhelm us. Many people also struggle with feelings of isolation, depression, and grief. Feeling left out of social events, prioritizing everyone else's needs before our own, and missing lost loved ones contribute to these feelings. So how can we find joy in the holidays and ensure we are present? Below are some ways you can practice mindfulness to transform your holiday stress into meaningful traditions that support emotional wellness.

Streamline Gift Giving

Consider giving the gift of time, experience, or an act of kindness. Consider doing something together as a family instead of exchanging gifts.

Let Go

No matter how much you plan and prepare, things will always happen that are out of your control. Let go of your high expectations so you don't feel upset if things don't go as planned.

Practice Mindful Eating

Constantly counting calories and being concerned with what you're eating can really take a toll on you. Remember, it is really all about moderation. Focus on eating balanced smaller meals, so you can afford to indulge at bigger events.

Incorporate Self-Care

Schedule time for yourself to recharge. Find something you enjoy and incorporate it into each day to nurture your own wellbeing.

Remember What's Important

Don't let a long store line or heavy traffic ruin your day. Remember what is important during the holidays; enjoying time with your friends, family, and loved ones. Try thinking of something good that happened to you today or things you are grateful for.

Take inventory of your feelings and use these techniques to be present during the holidays. Stepping back, getting perspective, and being mindful of what is really going on can help you make the most of your festivities and brighten your holidays.

Source: <https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/seven-ways-to-cope-with-holiday-stress>

FEATURED RECIPE

Winter Salad with Root Vegetables

Vegetarian

4 SERVINGS | 40 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large beetroot, peeled
- 1 or 2 sweet potatoes, peeled
- 3 carrots, peeled
- 3 large parsnip, peeled
- 2 red onions, peeled and cut into wedges
- 1 can (14oz-400 grams) chickpeas, drained
- 1 ½ Tbsp olive oil, divided
- salt and pepper, to sprinkle
- 3 cups (60 grams) baby arugula, washed (to add at the end)

DRESSING

- 1 ½ Tbsp olive oil
- 1 ½ Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 ½ tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 ½ tsp honey or maple syrup
- ¼ tsp fine salt, plus more to taste
- ⅛ tsp pepper, plus more to taste
- ½ garlic clove, grated (use more if you wish)
- 1 Tbsp dried oregano or 2 Tbsp fresh parsley

DIRECTIONS

1. Arrange two racks on the top and bottom thirds of the oven. Preheat to 425°F/220°C.
2. Peel, wash and cut the root vegetables into equal size-chunks (between 1-2 inches).
3. Line two baking pans with parchment paper and place the vegetables chunks on one of them, drizzle with half of the olive oil, season with salt and pepper, toss gently with your hands and spread them evenly without overlapping.
4. Place the drained chickpeas in the second baking pan, season with salt, pepper add the rest of the olive oil. Toss well to coat and spread them evenly.
5. Place both pans in the preheated oven (the chickpeas on the lowest rack) and bake for about 25 minutes or until the veggies are soft and slightly golden.
6. Meanwhile, place the dressing ingredients in a jam jar, close the lid, and shake until well combined and emulsified. Set aside.
7. When the roasted vegetable and the chickpeas cool off a little bit, place the arugula on a large serving tray or in a large bowl, and arrange the vegetables and the chickpeas on top.
8. When it's time to serve the salad, shake the dressing again, then drizzle with the honey mustard dressing and serve!

NOTES

Make ahead: If you make this winter salad ahead of time, I recommend assembling the salad with the arugula when it's time to serve or maximum 1-2 hour before, but make sure to add the dressing at the last minute.

How to store it: it keeps in the fridge in an airtight container for up to 3-4 days (without arugula and dressing)

NUTRITION

Serving Size: 2 cups salad & about 2 1/2 Tbsp. dressing

Per Serving:

Calories: 440
Carbohydrates: 75g
Saturated Fat: 2g
Total Sugars: 21g

Per Serving:

Protein: 10g
Dietary Fiber: 17g
Sodium: 295mg

Source: <https://theclevermeal.com/roasted-root-vegetable-salad/>

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