

Defeating Those Winter Blues

by Constance Brase, MA

Right now is the time of year when some people are affected by those “Winter Blues”, or a mild form of depression. Sunshine gives valuable nutrients, and what was stored in your body from last summer is now mostly depleted. There are some ways to counteract those “Blues” symptoms. As always, remember to check with your primary care provider before starting any new regimen involving over the counter medications or herbal vitamins and supplements as these can have a negative interaction with some prescription medications.

- 1) Get 15 minutes of sunshine at least every other day. If you can't get outside, sit in front of a window.
- 2) Buy a full spectrum light bulb, and use it in a lamp that sets close to you. Most health food stores have a supply of these.
- 3) Exercise produces the brain chemicals



called endorphins. These endorphins help relieve stress and improve mood.

4) The sense of smell is more important than commonly thought, and aromatherapy can be beneficial in many ways. Lavender and vanilla scents can have a calming effect, and there are others that might suit you better.

5) Take a bath! Or, if a bath isn't for you, a foot soak will work, too. Add Epsom salts to your bath, and that will increase the level of magnesium in your system. Besides being good for muscle aches and pains, it will benefit your mood, and it is FDA approved for

treatment of mild depression. And, there are now scented Epsom salts. Magnesium and aromatherapy combined into one!

Remember that if symptoms of depression last more than two weeks, you should check with your primary care provider or consult with a mental health therapist.

Here's to your Mental Wellness!

Call Southeast Health Group at 800.511.5446 for information or to schedule an appointment.