

# Clinical Depression vs. SAD

How do you know if you are truly depressed or experiencing seasonal affective disorder (SAD)?


**The conditions share traits but are distinctly different.**

## Clinical Depression

Can occur **any time of year**

Can have **biological, environmental, genetic and psychological causes**

### Symptoms include...

Changes in appetite and weight	Chronic feeling of depression	Difficulty concentrating
Fatigue	Insomnia	Loss of interest in favorite activities
Low energy levels	Sense of hopelessness	
Suicidal thoughts		

### Treating clinical depression may involve:


- ▶ Talk therapy
- ▶ Medication
- ▶ Brain stimulation in severe cases

## SAD

Typically begins during **late fall and lasts through winter**. Less commonly, it can occur during spring and summer.

**Has no identifiable cause.** However, lower than normal levels of the mood-balancing hormone serotonin, possibly caused by lack of sunlight, may play a role.

### Symptoms of winter SAD include ...

Eating too much	Sleeping too much	
Weight gain	Withdrawing from social activities	

### Symptoms of summer SAD include ...

	Agitation and restless feelings	Anxiety
	Violent episodes	Loss of appetite and weight

### SAD can be treated with:

- ▶ Antidepressant medication
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Vitamin D supplements
- ▶ Light therapy
- ▶ Talk therapy

