

## SAD More than “Winter Blues”

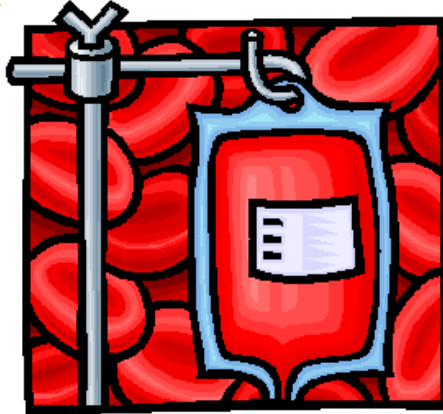
Do you find your energy level is lower during the winter than at other times of the year? What is commonly referred to as the “winter blues” is actually Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, and affects as many as one in five Americans.

SAD is a condition linked to fewer daylight hours and longer periods of darkness during the fall and winter months. Symptoms can include excessive sleeping, overeating, lack of interest in social activities, sadness, depression, insomnia, headaches and irritability. Although SAD’s exact cause is unknown, many believe it is related to a disturbance in the brain chemicals serotonin and melatonin.

Those who think they may be suffering from SAD should contact their primary care physician.

### SAD-Fighting Tip

Increase the amount of light in your home, or bundle up and head outdoors for a walk. Physical exercise also helps relieve SAD symptoms.



*January is National Blood Donor Month*

## Need for Blood Donors Rises During Winter

Blood is traditionally in short supply during the winter months due to the holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness. January, in particular, is a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations.

Every day in our country, approximately 39,000 units of blood are required in hospitals and emergency treatment facilities for patients with cancer and other diseases, for organ transplant recipients, and to help save the lives of accident victims.

If you are at least 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds and meet other donor requirements, you may be eligible to donate blood. The actual blood donation typically takes less than 10-12 minutes.



### Did you know....?

- Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood.
- Just one blood donation can help save up to three lives.
- The average adult has about 10 to 12 pints of blood in his/her body. Approximately one pint is given during a donation.
- Sixty percent of the U.S. population is eligible to give, but only five percent of those eligible actually do.
- Donated red blood cells must be used within 42 days of collection.

**To learn more about blood donation opportunities, visit the American Red Cross at [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org).**



## Try a Winter Workout

Winter's upon us, but think of it as a perfect time to start getting fit and healthy for spring! We all know how difficult it is to stay active during the winter months, but exercise helps combat winter depression and seasonal disorders.

### **Do something active everyday.**

Even in winter—often the hardest time of the year to be motivated—it's important to do something active every day. It might mean taking the steps at work or going to the mall and walking a few laps while window shopping. Something is always better than nothing, and you'll start to notice that the little things add up quickly.

**Do what you love to get yourself started.** Many times, the toughest part of working out is starting a new regimen. If you haven't been to a gym in a while, the best way to get back into the swing of things is to do something you enjoy. For example, take a long power walk instead of pedaling on the stationary bike.

**Jam out while you workout.** Throw on your iPod and listening to your favorite tunes. Build a few great play lists that get you excited and motivated to get active.

**Make a specific goal.** Instead of resolving to "work out more," promise yourself you're going to "go to the gym four times a week" or "do a set of sit-ups before work every day." If you have a firm resolution, it'll be harder to break.

# 12 Natural Tips to Preventing a Cold

Because there are no known cures for cold and flu, cold and flu prevention should be your goal this winter.

### **Wash Your Hands**

Most cold and flu viruses are spread by direct contact. Someone who has the flu sneezes onto their hand, and then touches the telephone, their keyboard or a kitchen glass. The germs can live for hours or weeks, so wash your hands often.



### **Don't Cover Your Sneezes and Coughs With Your Hands**

Because germs and viruses cling to your bare hands, muffling coughs and sneezes with your hands results in passing along your germs to others. Either use a tissue or turn your head away from people near you and cough into the air.

### **Don't Touch Your Face**

Cold and flu viruses enter your body through the eyes, nose and mouth. Touching their faces is the major way children catch colds, and a key way they pass colds onto their parents.

### **Drink Plenty of Fluids**

Water flushes your system, washing out the poisons as it re-hydrates you. A typical, healthy adult needs eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids each day.

### **Take a Sauna**

Researchers aren't clear about the exact role saunas play in prevention, but one 1989 German study found that people who steamed twice a week got half as many colds as those who didn't.

### **Get Fresh Air**

A regular dose of fresh air is important, especially in cold weather when central heating dries you out and makes your body more vulnerable to cold and flu viruses.

### **Do Aerobic Exercise Regularly**

Aerobic exercise speeds up the heart to pump larger quantities of blood; makes you breathe faster to help transfer oxygen from your lungs to your blood; and makes you sweat once your body heats up.

### **Eat Foods Containing Phytochemicals**

"Phyto" means plants, and the natural chemicals in dark green, red, and yellow vegetables and fruits provide a supercharged boost.

### **Eat Yogurt**

Some studies have shown that eating a daily cup of low-fat yogurt can reduce your susceptibility to colds by 25 percent.

### **Don't Smoke**

Statistics show that heavy smokers get more severe colds and more frequent ones. Even being around smoke profoundly zaps the immune system.

### **Cut Alcohol Consumption**

Heavy alcohol use suppresses the immune system in a variety of ways. Heavier drinkers are more prone to initial infections as well as secondary complications. Alcohol also dehydrates the body.

### **Relax**

If you can teach yourself to relax, you can activate your immune system on demand. There's evidence that when you put your relaxation skills into action, your interleukins -- leaders in the immune system response against cold and flu viruses -- increase in the bloodstream.

Source: WebMD



# Know Your Numbers for a Healthy Heart



You can learn a lot about your heart by paying attention to a few simple numbers. When you know what numbers indicate a strong, healthy heart, you can set goals to reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke. If you don't know what your numbers are, ask your primary care provider at your next visit.

## Numbers that Count

Numbers that Count	Goal
Total Cholesterol	Less than 200 mg/dL
LDL (Bad) Cholesterol	Less than 160 mg/dL (for those with low risk for heart disease) Less than 130 mg/dL (for those with intermediate risk for heart disease) Less than 100 mg/dL (for those with high risk for heart disease)
HDL (Good) Cholesterol	Women: 50 mg/dL or higher Men: 40 mg/dL or higher
Triglycerides	Less than 150 mg/dL
Blood Pressure	Less than 120/80 mmHg
Waist Circumference	Women: 35 inches or less Men: 40 inches or less

**For more information, visit the American Heart Association at [www.americanheart.org/numbersthatcount](http://www.americanheart.org/numbersthatcount)**

## Wellness Briefs

### What's for Dinner?

People typically eat more for dinner than at breakfast or lunch. The only problem is that this eating pattern top loads an individual's day with calories when needed the least. Instead of gobbling down a tuna sandwich at your desk, set aside 30 minutes to enjoy a better-balanced plate of meat, veggies and potatoes, which helps avoid an afternoon binge and craving for a large dinner.

### Kids to Parents: Turn off that TV

It seems kids just don't care as much about TV as much as their parents. "Millennials" (ages 14-25) watch an average of just 10.5 hours of TV a week. Conversely, Generation X (ages 26-42) clocked in at 15.1 hours of TV a week, while Baby Boomers (43-61) watch 19.2 hours a week and those 62-75 tune in for a whopping 21.5 hours each week, according to findings of a new study from Deloitte, "The State of the Media Democracy."

## Healthy Recipes

### Italian Pasta Veggie Salad

Prep Time:  
10 minutes

Cook Time:  
15 minutes

#### Ingredients:

- 10 ounces fusilli pasta
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms
- 3/4 cup fat free Italian-style dressing

#### Directions:

In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook pasta until al dente, rinse under cold water and drain.

In a large bowl, combine pasta, onion, bell pepper, tomatoes and mushrooms. Pour enough dressing over to coat; toss and refrigerate until chilled.

#### Nutritional Information:

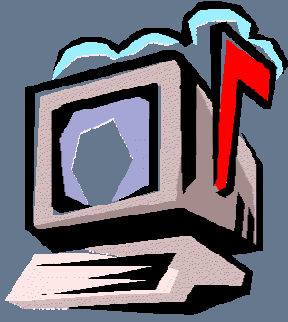
183 calories per serving

Total Fat – 0.7 g

Cholesterol – 0 mg

For additional recipes, visit [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)

*This newsletter is for educational purposes and general reference only. It is not intended to be a substitute for medical advice. You should consult a physician regarding your individual health needs.*



**Do...**

Keep it short and sweet.

Use an attention-getting subject line that is relevant to the topic of your email.

Use bold, italicized or underlined words sparingly to emphasize key points.

Check your e-mail for grammar and punctuation mistakes before sending.

Avoid abbreviations or Internet slang.

**Don't...**

Use e-mail to avoid unpleasant tasks, sensitive issues or complicated subject matter that requires back and forth questions.

Constantly check for new messages. One company's HR department estimated that its employees spent about 1 ½ hours a day on their in-boxes!

Overuse the cc function. Try to limit the number of people receiving your e-mail to those who absolutely need the information. Similarly, avoid "replying to all," whenever possible.

Use all caps, BECAUSE IT COULD BE INTERPRETED THAT YOU ARE SHOUTING.

Email someone when angry. E-mails are permanent communication records, so once you hit the send button, it's hard to take back what you've said or explain how you meant to say it.

# Quitting smoking is tough... but well worth the effort



**Mark Twain once said, "Quitting smoking is easy. I've done it a thousand times."**

**If you smoke, chances are you've tried to quit, too. .. or three or four times.**

Smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in the U.S. The bad news, as anyone who has tried to quit knows, is that it is one of the most difficult things one might ever do. The good news is that once you do stop smoking – no matter how long or how much you've smoked – your risk of heart disease starts to drop. It's cut in half in half after one year without smoking, then continues to decline until it's as low as a non-smoker's risk.

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***I've been smoking for a long time, so won't it take a long time for me to notice any difference if I do quit?***

**Not according to these eye-opening statistics.**

20 minutes after quitting — Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

*(Effect of Smoking on Arterial Stiffness and Pulse Pressure Amplification, Mahmud, A, Feely, J. 2003.)*

12 hours after quitting — The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

*(U.S. Surgeon General's Report, 1988)*

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting — Your circulation improves and your lung function increases. *(U.S. Surgeon General's Report, 1990)*

## Steps to Quitting

List reasons to quit (and there are many), including health, financial, etc). Read the list several times a day.

Keep cigarettes out of easy reach.

Try to smoke fewer cigarettes each day, and try not to smoke the ones that aren't most important.

Don't buy a new pack until you finish the one you're smoking. Try to stop for 48 hours at one time.

Stay busy... go to the movies, exercise, take long walks.

Avoid situations and "triggers" you relate with smoking.

Carry sugarless gum or artificial sweetened mints. Munch carrots or celery sticks.

Try deep breathing exercises when you get the urge to smoke.

Try one of the many over-the-counter smoking patches/lozenges. Check your benefit plan to see if it's covered.

For more smoking cessation tips and resources, go to [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or [www.nysmokefree.com](http://www.nysmokefree.com)