

Northwest Regional Burn Model System

UW Medicine Regional Burn Center
at Harborview Medical Center

Seattle, Washington



Winter 2015

Newsletter

What's New?

February 1-7, 2015 Burn Awareness Week

Anytime Join us on Facebook and Twitter for frequent holiday fire and injury prevention tips during the month of December and January.

April 21-24, 2015 48th Annual Meeting of the American Burn Association Chicago, Illinois



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Facebook or Twitter

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad or feels their energy level drop during the dark, winter months here in the Northwest. But these feelings typically pass within a couple of days. When these feelings last more than a couple of weeks and start to interfere with your work, family life and ability to find pleasure in any aspect of your life, then you may be suffering from a form of depression known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is depression that occurs during the winter months when there is less natural sunlight, but lifts during the spring and summer months. Recovering from a major trauma, such as a burn injury, or going through any stressful life event can trigger SAD or other forms of depression. Symptoms of depression include:

- Frequent tearfulness or sadness that lasts most of the day
- Inability to enjoy activities that you previously enjoyed
- Sleeping too little or sleeping too much
- Eating too little or eating too much
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Feeling hopeless about the future
- Feeling like you want to hurt yourself

You need to experience five or more of these symptoms in order to have a diagnosis of depression. But sometimes symptoms can be so severe, that they interfere with quality of life even if there is no diagnosis of depression. Turn to the reverse side of this newsletter to learn what to do.

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If you would like to receive a copy of our newsletter, email us at NWRBMS@uw.edu and request either an email or paper copy. Please include the appropriate email or postal address with your request.



Photo by Clare McLeah/UW Medicine

HANDWASHING --
IT HELPS KEEP OUR
PATIENTS SAFE!

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

What to Do:

- Light Therapy – This treatment is specifically for SAD and typically involves sitting in front of a “light box” for certain periods of time during the day. The box emits a full spectrum light and can help to reset the body’s daily rhythms that have been disrupted by short days and long nights. This treatment is effective in about half of those who use it and can be used in conjunction with the following common treatments of depression.
- Therapy – Such as cognitive behavioral therapy once a week with a qualified counselor.
- Exercise – At least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise a day.
- Antidepressants – There are many to choose from so discuss this option with your doctor.
- Melatonin – There is some evidence that melatonin taken at certain times of the day can help specifically with SAD. Consult your doctor for recommendations.
- Don’t wait to get treatment. The longer you wait, the harder it can be to treat.
- Don’t expect to see results right away. Treating depression can take time.
- Stay positive. Learning to focus on what is going well in your life is an important part of treatment.
- Make a list of activities that you enjoy doing and schedule one of these activities everyday.

The UW Medicine Regional Burn Center has a staff of psychologists who are trained to assess and treat SAD and other forms of depression. We can offer assessment and treatment or referrals to providers in your area if you live outside of Seattle. Please call Dr. Shelley Wiechman, Ph.D at (206)744-4439 for more information.

Visit our website at <http://burnrehab.washington.edu/>

Holiday Fire and Injury Prevention



Christmas tree Do’s and Don’ts:

- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched.
- Before placing the tree in the stand, cut 2 inches from the base of the trunk.
- Make sure the tree is at least 3 feet from any heat source (fireplace, radiator, candles, heat vents or lights).
- Add water to the tree stand daily.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.