



Health & Wellness

February 2017

www.gmsinsurance.com

February Blues

The winter can feel never-ending especially in northern climates like Canada. The long hours of darkness, the bundling up against the cold, and the general greyness of our environment can all take their toll on our moods. By February, the winter blues have tested our limits.

If you're feeling a bit down, negative, or in a rut, you may have the winter blues. This is a general state of mental fatigue and sadness. However, if you have prolonged or severe mood swings that impact your daily living, you may be dealing with something more serious such as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or depression. If that's the case, talk to your doctor. Mental health is just as important as your physical well-being and it deserves a check-up too.

The general winter blues can be challenging but you can overcome them with a few tips to get you through to spring:

Remain Active

Releasing endorphins has a positive impact on general mood and the best way to release them is through exercise. The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends adults get 2.5 hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity a week.

Winter doesn't mean you have to stop exercising. Winter activities are plentiful in Canada – ice skating, skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, tobogganing, even a straight-forward brisk walk. If getting outdoors isn't for you, try a gym, mall walking, indoor driving range, indoor soccer, football, or volleyball.

Check your Vitamin D Levels

Many Canadians are vitamin D deficient especially in the winter months. Vitamin D is used to help keep our muscles, nerves, and immune system working. Our bodies can naturally generate vitamin D but requires exposure to the sun which is limited in winter due to shorter daylight hours and covering up our skin against the cold. Look for foods fortified with vitamin D or consider a supplement.

Stay Connected

When we are feeling low, it's easy to become withdrawn and enter a hibernation-type state. Fight that instinct and visit with friends and family. They can often lighten the burden and help you through the dark times.

Smile

According to the *Harvard University Gazette*, smiling, even if you don't feel like it, can improve your mood. Smile when greeting others – you'll feel better and may make someone else feel better in the process.

Plan an Event

Set a date for a special event - it may be an evening out with friends, a day-trip somewhere, or a longer vacation. Having something to plan for and look forward to can be the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

Have Hope

Brighter days are only a few weeks away. Daylight Savings Time begins March 12th and spring arrives on March 20th.



Our intention is to provide information about healthy living and achieving a balanced lifestyle. It is not meant to replace medical, legal, financial, or other professional advice. Always consult the professional directly related to your own circumstances before making decisions about your personal well-being.