



# Beating the January Blues

Lower than average mood or seasonal affective disorder (SAD), is a common issue in the winter months in the UK and can be due to several reasons.

The reduced number of daylight hours coupled with less time spent outside means that we have less exposure to sunlight, and this can alter our hormonal balance leading to feelings of depression and tiredness. We may be less socially active in the winter months. We may lower the amount of physical activity we engage in. Sometimes our eating habits change in the winter and sway towards more carbohydrate heavy meals, which if consumed at a time of less activity could equal weight gain.

## Combating SAD

- Getting outside as much as possible.
- Stay physically active.
- Maintain a balanced and healthy diet.
- Invest in a light box which mimics sunlight indoors.
- Keep up with social interaction.
- Engage positive stress relief tools.

## Work based ideas to promote SAD awareness

- Spread information and awareness throughout the workforce with posters and emails.
- Talk about it! Opening a conversation around how you are feeling is a useful way to access support.
- Organise lunchtime walks with colleagues, maybe set a step count challenge.
- Support healthy food choices at work.
- Plan a social event for the new year as this post-Christmas and new year period can be hard for a lot of people.
- Encourage spending some time outside.
- Promote the EAP.





# Get to Know Your Thyroid



The thyroid gland is a small endocrine gland in your neck. It makes two hormones that are secreted into the blood: thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3).

These hormones are necessary for all the cells in your body to work normally and are involved in regulating metabolism, heart rate and body temperature.

Thyroid disorders are very common and mainly tend to occur in women, although anybody can be affected. According to the British Thyroid Foundation around 1 in every 20 people has a thyroid disorder which may be temporary or permanent.

**Hypothyroidism** (underactive thyroid) – is when not enough thyroxine is produced for the body's needs.

**Hyperthyroidism** (overactive thyroid) – is when too much thyroxine is produced for the body's needs.



## Underactive Thyroid symptoms



- Fatigue and tiredness
- Sensitivity to the cold
- Constipation
- Dry skin and hair
- Low mood and mental slowness
- Heavy periods and fertility problems

## Overactive Thyroid symptoms

- Weight loss, despite an increased appetite
- Palpitations / rapid pulse / sweating / heat intolerance
- Tiredness and weak muscles
- Nervousness, irritability and shakiness
- Mood swings or aggressive behaviour
- Looseness of the bowels
- Thirst / passing larger than usual amounts of urine
- An enlarged thyroid gland

## Testing and treatment

If you are experiencing symptoms that you are concerned about or have a family history of thyroid disorder, then the best thing to do is have a simple blood test to measure the hormone levels being produced by the thyroid. Our Onsite Health Checks can include such a test, it is also available at your GP surgery. Treatment for most people involves taking medication to help balance the hormone levels and doesn't involve dietary changes.

JANUARY

20th

## Save the date | Brew Monday

20th January 2020 is #BrewMonday, take time for a cuppa and a chat. Beat the January blues together.

