



More Than the Winter Blues

Many of us get a mild case of the winter blues. But some people suffer from something more serious. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is depression that strikes in the fall and winter months. Shorter days and lack of sunlight can greatly affect emotional well-being. These are some of the signs of SAD:

- Feelings of sadness that won't go away
- Extreme fatigue
- Anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased appetite
- Weight gain

These symptoms can happen at any time. If they occur in the fall or winter, last more than two weeks, and disrupt your life, see your doctor. SAD can be treated.

Can a Health Coach Help You?

The Vermont Medicaid Chronic Care Management Program's (VTCCMP) Health Coaches are here to help. This is one member's story:

Mary* started having headaches, dizziness, and trouble getting her words out. She didn't call her doctor because she was embarrassed. She did not want to bother him. She thought it was probably nothing and did not want to waste his time.

Mary spoke with her APS Nurse Health Coach. Her Health Coach knew, based on a thorough assessment, that these symptoms should not be ignored. The Health Coach asked Mary to call her doctor.

Mary called her doctor. The doctor was concerned about her symptoms. He did some tests and set up an appointment for Mary to see a specialist.

Mary's problems were addressed before she got really sick. Now Mary understands that she knows her body the best. It is up to her to tell her doctor when something is wrong.

If you have a health question, contact an APS Nurse Health Coach at **1-866-900-5004**.

**Name of real member has been changed to protect privacy.*

What Our Members Are Saying About VTCCMP:

"Good timing—I think you can help me!"

"Thank you for caring about people!"

"Great program! I am glad a program like this exists for people with chronic health issues, and I will use it. Thank you for this wonderful program."

"It's nice to have a Vermonter to call!"

"This is a lovely program. I'm very happy to be selected to receive it."

"Thank you for checking up on me!"

"Good to know if I have questions about my health, I have somewhere to call."



A New Vision of Holiday Eating

Indulging over the holidays can do more than stretch your waistline. The risk of having a heart attack is four times greater after eating a large meal high in fat and calories. The good news is that you can enjoy the holidays in a healthy way.

Get Creative

These simple changes to your recipes can reduce fat and calories while keeping the flavor:

- Use egg substitutes or egg whites (two whites per one whole egg).
- When a recipe calls for oil or butter, try a fruit puree, such as applesauce, instead.
- Use half the sugar called for in pie recipes.
- Use low-fat dairy products.

Change one ingredient at a time so that you know which changes you like best.

Party Planner

At holiday parties, you don't always have control over the types of foods available. Make the best of your choices and cut back on portions:

- Take only a sliver of your favorite desserts.
- If you're having pie, don't eat all the crust.
- Sample the fresh fruit platter.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Eat a healthy meal before the party so that you don't overindulge.

When you bring a dish to share, keep in mind that the guests also might be watching their eating habits. Offer healthy alternatives to feel good about what you're serving.



Why Quit Smoking?

You know you should quit smoking. But you just haven't gotten around to it yet. Here are some reasons to help you commit to quitting.

Your smile will be brighter. With every puff, nicotine and tar coat and stain your teeth. After you quit, make an appointment with your dentist to have the yellow stains cleaned. Your whiter smile can remind you of your accomplishment.

You will develop fewer wrinkles. Nicotine can block the blood supply to your skin, which can cause wrinkles. Tobacco smoke can dry your skin and make it more prone to wrinkles.

Food will taste better. Smoking takes a lot of the pleasure from eating by interfering with your senses of taste and smell.

You may not get sick as often. Smoking damages your airways and makes you more prone to coughs, colds, and infections.

You will have a better chance of living a longer, healthier life. As soon as you stop smoking, your body starts to recover. The health benefits start as soon as 20 minutes after quitting.

You will have more money in your pocket every day. Think about what you can do with the money you don't spend on cigarettes.

There are plenty of other reasons to quit smoking. Make your own list and keep it posted where you can see it every day. Quitting smoking may be the most difficult, but also the most rewarding, thing you ever do.

For help quitting smoking, call the Vermont Quit Line at **1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)**. The Quit Line offers smokers counseling to help you plan to quit, self-help materials, and a referral to a local program. The Quit Line also can tell you how you can get free nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges.

7 Ways to Avoid Colds and the Flu

You don't want to spend the fall and winter battling a runny nose, a nagging cough, or a fever. But colds and flu come with the season, right? They don't have to. Try this advice:

1 Get a flu shot. The best time to get the flu vaccine is in October or November, but getting the vaccine later is better than not getting it at all. The young, elderly, and chronically ill are most at risk, but almost everyone can benefit from the vaccine. Flu shots don't cause the flu. They also won't prevent colds.

2 Wash your hands often. Using soap and water for 10 seconds or more is recommended for cleaning harmful germs (including cold and flu viruses) off hands.

3 Use tissues, and then toss them. Tissues are a better choice than handkerchiefs. Wash your hands after using a tissue.

4 Avoid people who look ill. If you shake the hand of someone who has a cold or the flu, there's a greater risk you'll become ill. All it takes to infect you is a brief exposure and then rubbing your eyes, nose, or mouth.

5 Eat a balanced diet. Include plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Try to get most of your nutrients from food. If you're unable to eat well, talk to your doctor about taking a multivitamin.

6 Get plenty of rest. The average person needs seven to eight hours of sleep a night. Teens and senior citizens may need eight to nine hours. You should feel rested when you wake up.

7 Keep stress in check. Stress can lower your ability to resist getting colds and flu. Exercise regularly as a way to keep stress from building up.



The ABCs of Diabetes Care

Below is a list of important tests for people with diabetes to have.

A = A1c

This blood test measures blood sugar control over the past three months. You should have this test at least twice a year. Your doctor may want to test your A1c more than twice if you are changing your medicine.

B = Blood Pressure

Your blood pressure should be less than 130/80 mm Hg if you have diabetes. Have your blood pressure checked at each visit to your doctor.

C = Cholesterol

Cholesterol is the fat that is in our blood. You should have your cholesterol tested at least once a year to check your heart health.

D = Damage to Kidneys

You should have a urine test done once a year to check for problems with your kidneys. This test checks for protein in your urine, which can be a sign of kidney damage.

E = Eye Care

People who have diabetes should have a dilated eye exam each year. Remember that this is a special eye

exam that is not the same as having your vision checked for glasses.

F = Foot Care

Check your feet every day for redness, warmth, swelling, or calluses. You should have your feet inspected by your doctor during each visit. You should have a complete foot exam every year.

Call your Health Coach at 1-866-900-5004 to discuss any of the topics in the newsletter or other health issues. Visit our Web site at www.vtccmp.com



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