

The Winter Blues

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There is nothing quite like feeling the warmth of the sun on your skin, breathing in the scent of a beautiful day, and enjoying the rush of happy thoughts. Unfortunately, these experiences most often occur on sunny summer days. Needless to say, Grand Rapids Michigan is not well known for its many sunny days, especially during the winter months. This doesn't mean we can't still experience happiness without the sun, it is simply more difficult.

At howstuffworks.com there is an informative web page* explaining the ups and downs of sunlight and its affects. The article references some solid research related to this subject:

"People actually get depressed, with symptoms like sadness, fatigue and hopelessness -- from a lack of sunlight. The form of depression most often associated with variations in sunlight is seasonal affective disorder (SAD). The disorder runs in cycles of depression and wellness that follow the seasons -- more specifically, the availability of sunlight. Someone with SAD might feel perfectly fine in spring and summer, and then experience a severe downturn in mood when fall hits. They'll stay that way through the winter, until the sun comes out again in full force. SAD is particularly prevalent in parts of the world with little winter daylight and/or extended overcast periods, like Alaska or the U.S. Northwest."

The majority of individuals who have mood swings during the darker winter months do not have Seasonal Affective disorder. It is quite natural to tolerate so