



Holiday Blues

Fact:

The holidays are a mixed bag for most people.

Fiction:

It's a myth that everyone else experiences unmixed joy at holiday time.

Prevention:

A few simple steps can prevent the holiday blues.

Treatment:

Taking care of yourself can be just what the doctor ordered.

The holidays. What could bring more joy? But many people feel lonely, judge themselves harshly and worry about the future at this time.

Understanding the Holiday Blues

Advertisers paint an image of perfect joy and happy families that real people can't reach—even if, or especially if, they buy the suggested products.

The holidays can be a time of contradiction:

- People who are unable to be with family or friends, whose romantic lives fall short of their dreams, or who have lost loved ones in the past can be filled with loneliness and regret. On the other hand, people inundated with relatives can be irritable, stressed and fatigued.
- Financial constraints can make people feel guilty that they aren't providing more extravagant gifts—or drive them to overspend, leading to stress about debt.
- Great food and drink can disrupt diets and cause headaches, hangovers and difficulty sleeping.

Prevention and Treatment

A few simple steps can help manage the holiday blues:

- Keep expectations manageable, and view the holidays as a season, not a particular day or event
- Remember that no season can eliminate all reasons for sadness
- Put the past in the past and look forward
- Do something for someone else
- Enjoy free activities, such as viewing holiday decorations, going for a walk and window shopping
- Do little or no drinking
- If your blues tend to begin in the fall and last through the winter, read up on Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and how to treat it
- Feel free to break traditions and try something new
- Spend time with supportive and caring people
- Save time for yourself

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