

# Can Seasonal Affective Disorder Affect Your Sex Life? Experts Explain

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Yeah, it's the holiday season and all, but that doesn't mean you're feeling holly-jolly. It's not uncommon to feel low during the cold, dark months of the year. Seasonal affective disorder could be to blame, and it can make this season super difficult to get through. And when you're down, you might not be up for getting frisky. So, how can seasonal affective disorder affect your sex life?

When everyone around you seems to be kissing under the mistletoe and jingle bell rocking in the sheets, you might be feeling less-than-sexy and wondering what all of this means. Maybe you've been diagnosed with seasonal affective disorder, or maybe you suspect you might have it because each winter, you find yourself feeling down in the dumps.

So, what *is* seasonal affective disorder anyway? According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the condition, appropriately abbreviated to SAD, is a form of depression that literally comes and goes when the seasons change, with symptoms usually subsiding by spring break or summertime. In other words, seasonal affective disorder can take you from feeling extra to low-key as soon as winter hits.

What does the wintertime blues mean for your sex life? I spoke to some sexual health experts who helped me sort out the real impact SAD can have on your mojo.

Stocksy / Ben Ryan

Rivka Sidorsky, a certified sex therapist at Rivka Sidorsky & Associates, tells Elite Daily that seasonal affective disorder "has similarities to depression in that you may feel lethargic, sleep more than usual, have insomnia, or have appetite changes." As a result of all these weird feelings, "you may have a decreased interest in sex, and both your desire and your arousal may be impacted."

According to Debi Pruit, a sexpert at Dr. Tom Murray, PhD and Associates, when there's less sunlight during the fall and winter, our bodies produce less of the brain neurotransmitter serotonin which may "may trigger depression and affect sleep patterns. Any time a partner is depressed, insecure about their body image, or having trouble sleeping, their sex life will directly be affected," she explains. If you're not feeling happy, you're probably not feeling horny, either.

Lawrence A. Siegel, clinical sexologist and certified sexuality educator, tells me that "when someone is feeling depressed, regardless of where on the continuum [of depression] they may be, sexual desire and arousal are usually casualties for both men and women," but that the

condition is diagnosed much more often in women.

So, how do you know if SAD is the culprit for a less-than-satisfactory sex life? Are there any signs to look out for? [Dr. Rachel Needle](#), a licensed psychologist, certified sex therapist, and the co-director of Modern Sex Therapy Institutes, explains that when someone is "experiencing depression, they may be less interested in things they previously enjoyed, feel less motivated, and have lower sexual desire." It sounds like if you have SAD and aren't thinking about getting laid, the two may likely be connected. Sidorsky adds that "some women develop difficulties with orgasm as a result of lowered libido." Basically, if you're not feeling like yourself, don't be surprised if most aspects of your life are impacted, including your motivation to get it on.

If it makes you feel any better, seasonal affective disorder is apparently super common. [Laura Lohr](#), a sex therapist and licensed clinical social worker associate, says that psychotherapists are often busier this time of year due to a spike in SAD. For people with the condition, "sex might be the last thing on their mind because they are consumed with sadness." This is totally understandable when you think about it. Lohr adds, "When you're sad or feeling depressed, if you have tears rolling down your cheeks, are you thinking about sexy time with your partner? Probably not!"

### Stocksy / Ryan Tuttle

Well, is there any hope for people with SAD who don't want it to have an impact on their sex life? First of all, if you need to go talk to a pro about what's been going on, there's no shame in the game. Sidorsky tells Elite Daily that a lot of people "seek medication and therapy to help [them] get through the winter" or any difficult time, for that matter.

But there are a few things you could try on your own, too, like exercising, eating healthier, or getting a "happy lamp" (an indoor light that mimics the sun) "which is very helpful in treating SAD," says Sidorsky. Lohr adds that "talking to your partner for 20 minutes a day can also be very beneficial." Of course, SAD is no one's fault. Winter can have a strange impact on the chemicals in your brain, and sometimes, talking to your bae about how you've been feeling can help the situation.

If gray skies and cold temps have you down this winter, you're not alone in feeling this way, and there's definitely hope. Just remember that seasonal affective disorder won't last forever — spring will have you sprung again before you know it.

*If you or someone you love is battling with a mental health condition, remember that help is always available. [The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) provides free and confidential assistance around the clock. You can reach them at 1-800-273-8255.*