Got The Winter Blues?

The winter blues occur during the shortest, coldest and darkest days of the year with peak in January and February and dissipates in the spring. The thought is that the reduced sunlight affects our moods by altering our neurotransmitters in our brains.

Signs you have the winter blues are feeling sad, fatigue or sleeping more than usual, feeling less motivated to do things, feeling irritable or moody, overeating or craving comfort foods such as carbohydrates.

Tips to beat the winter blues:

Vitamin D supplementation. Vitamin D is created when your skin is exposed to direct sunlight so levels can get lower in the winter which may affect your mood. It is estimated that 77% of Americans have low levels of vitamin D. Appropriate levels of vitamin D supplementation include over the counter D3 1000-2000 units per day.

Practice meditation and/or mindfulness. This can be done through an app on your phone or in a class setting.

Light therapy. This involves sitting close to a light box for 30 minutes per day. They are recommended for use earlier in the day to prevent trouble sleeping at night. These can be purchased for your home or they can also be rented at CLSB for use.

Wake up with a dawn simulator. These are light boxes that work as alarms. They mimic natural sunrise by starting with very low light that gradually frighten the room over 30-45 minutes. This can make it a little easier to get up in the morning when it is dark outside.

Stay active. Exercise can boost your levels of serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine (our happy neurotransmitters).