Health Gare

CRANFIELD CHIROPRACTIC CENTRE **518 GUELPH STREET** NORVAL, ONTARIO 877-4288



HEALTH DIGEST

Blood donor clinic: Canadian Blood Services holds a blood donor clinic on Thursday, Oct. 12 at Acton Legion Hall, 15 Wright Ave., 3:30-7:30 p.m. Healthy, individuals, aged 17-70 with proper i.d. are urged to attend. The Toronto Blood Centre which serves the Halton Hills area needs to collect at least 650 units of blood per day in order to meet the needs of patients in 59 hospitals in Central Ontario.

Living with Stroke: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario holds a Living with Stroke six-week session for stroke survivors and their caregivers, beginning on Tuesday, Oct. 17. The sessions will be run at Halton Hills Speech Centre, 328 Guelph St., Georgetown, 3:30-5 p.m. To register or for information call Joanne, 873-8400.

Literacy volunteers: The North Halton Literacy Guild is holding an orientation and training workshop Oct. 18 and Oct. 21 for potential tutors who are interested in tutoring adults students. Teaching experience is not a necessity. Openings are also available in marketing and serving on the board. Call 873-2200.

Friends in Deed: Friends in Deed, celebrating its 25th year, welcomes new members. It is a social group for physically disabled adults. The group usually meets the last Tuesday of each month (although this month because of Halloween it meets on Oct. 24) at Robert Little School in Acton. For more information call 877-5045 or 853-0843.

Fall can signal the beginning of the winter blues

Then the leaves begin to turn shades of gold and auburn and the autumn months progress into winter, many people eagerly await the first snowfall and the chance to curl up by the fireplace. Not everyone experiences such positive emotions as autumn sets in.

Did you know that around this time of year about a quarter of the Canadian population becomes much less active and more irritable as temperatures decline? Some become very anxious or depressed as the holidays approach.

Within this group is a significant subgroup (10 to 15 per cent of the population) that feel something even more debilitating than the winter blues. This group experiences temporary but recurring patterns of moderate to severe depressive symptoms. This disorder is known as SAD, or Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Researchers suspect this disorder is triggered by the individual's sensitivities to the shorter days, less exposure to daylight hours, and in the northern climates, the perception of a long winter ahead. Statistically, the most susceptible to these changes are women between the ages of 20 and 40. However, SAD is also known to occur in men and the elderly as well.

Yet there is more to learn since a pattern of "summer blues" has also been recently recognized but occurs to a much lesser extent.

The signs of SAD are not always openly obvious and the symptoms are quite different— some even opposite to those that accompany typical clinical depression. This can make correct diagnosis quite challenging. Physicians look for some of these specific signs as their guide:

- Decreased energy levels
- Increased appetite
- Slow weight gain
- Lethargy
- Hypersomnia (the desire to sleep more than usual)
- A lack of interest in performing daily activities
- A recurring pattern of onset and cessation related to seasonality

An intriguing and important characteristic of SAD is that by spring the moods and symptoms associated with this type of depression greatly improve.

For many, autumn means the return to school and work routines, and to looking forward to the holiday and winter activities. But for some, the fall season means the return of SAD (Seasonal Affect-ive Disorder), a more severe form of the blues with winter moderate to severe depressive symptoms.

Most describe it as a feeling of being back to themselves again.

Can SAD suffers feel better earlier? Yes, there is help and there is hope. A visit with a trusted health professional is the first important step. Bright light therapy has been shown to be effective in reducing symptoms, and regular daily sessions can be arranged.

Some lifestyle changes are suggested as well and they include:

- Opening your home and workplace to more light and fresh air — especially if a great deal of your time is spent indoors
- Follow healthy nutrition habits by avoiding junk food with high sugar content
 - Being outdoors as much as possible.

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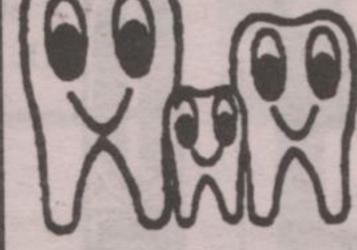
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