

# Cayuga-Onondaga Area School Employees'

HEALTHCARE PLAN  
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In an effort to promote the well-being of all Members and Staff, the COASEHP is distributing monthly Wellness Reminders and Tips from Excellus BCBS and ENV Insurance Agency. We hope you find the information useful.



As the days get shorter and the temperatures colder, some people may notice they feel down or have less energy than usual. This could just be the *winter blues* caused by less activity, or stress or sadness related to the holidays. Daylight, exercise, healthy eating, and spending time with family and friends may help. In some cases, it may be Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is a form of depression. Symptoms of SAD include anxiety, cravings for carbohydrates, lack of energy, inability to concentrate, or irritability. People with these symptoms should talk to their doctor. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, SAD occurs much more often in women than in men, and it is more common in those living farther north (like New York or New England), where there are shorter daylight hours in the winter.

#### Here are some additional resources:

[National Institute of Mental Health](#)

[Cleveland Clinic](#)

[American Psychological Association](#)

[Excellus BCBS 12/2021 Wellness]

#### What is seasonal affective disorder (SAD)?

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is depression that gets triggered by a change in seasons, usually when fall starts. This seasonal depression gets worse in the winter before ending in the spring.

Some people may get a mild version of SAD known as the "winter blues." It's normal to feel a little down during colder months. You may be stuck inside, and it gets dark early.

Full SAD goes beyond that - it's a form of [depression](#). Unlike the winter blues, SAD affects your daily life, including how you feel and think. Fortunately, treatment can help you get through this challenging time.

#### Can people get summer depression?

Some people get a rare form of SAD called "summer depression." It starts in the late spring or early summer and ends in the fall.

#### How common is seasonal affective disorder (SAD)?

About 5% of adults in the United States experience SAD. It tends to start in young adulthood. SAD affects women more than men, though researchers aren't sure why. About 75% of people who get seasonal affective disorder are women.

About 10% to 20% of people in America may get a milder form of the winter blues.

[Read more of this article on the Cleveland Clinic website link listed above]

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## BATTLING HOLIDAY DEPRESSION AND STRESS

While many look forward to the holidays, others dread the season. If you feel stressed, the obligations at holiday time can take their toll on even the most cheerful of people.

Here are some tips to help you minimize holiday stress.

### Causes of Stress

Ask yourself what exactly about the season makes you feel stressed. Your feelings may be triggered by the following:

- ❖ Unhappy childhood memories
- ❖ Negative feelings about your life over the past year
- ❖ Lowered immune defenses because of colder temperatures, high incidence of the flu, eating more and sleeping less
- ❖ Difficult familial relationships
- ❖ Financial Stress
- ❖ Seasonal monotony—seeing the same faces, eating the same food and going through the same motions

### Minimize Holiday Stress

Consider the following tips to help reduce stress this holiday season:

- ❖ Enjoy the present and try not to worry about what may be lacking.
- ❖ Ask others for assistance. For example, ask a relative to host the family get-together, or make it a potluck and have everyone contribute to the meal.
- ❖ Make time for yourself and your needs, even when hosting guests in your house.
- ❖ Create a new tradition, such as volunteering, especially if you feel lonely.
- ❖ Limit your alcohol intake.
- ❖ Make a to-do list in chronological order to minimize stress.
- ❖ Don't feel you must meet all family obligations. Do not simply do something or go somewhere because of tradition, especially if it makes you unhappy.
- ❖ Stay active and continue to eat a balanced diet.
- ❖ Keep tabs on your holiday spending. Make a budget and stick to it, no exceptions.

[ENV Insurance – Live Well Work Well Newsletter]

### ~~ COASEHP Members: Don't forget about your First Stop Health Telemedicine Benefit ~~

Getting care you need shouldn't be a pain. For a sore throat, cough, skin rash, earache, medical questions, etc. – your **COASEHP First Stop Health benefit is there for you**. You can talk to a doctor 24/7 via phone or video for treatment in minutes. You can also download the App on Google Play or the AppStore.

**Did you know: COASEHP Member** covered dependents age 18 and older can download the First Stop App, set up their own account and manage their visits. If a covered dependent has issues setting up their own account, they can call FSH at (888) 691-7867.

**Refer to the attached First Stop Health information.**