



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CLICK ON THE STORY YOU WANT TO READ

Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Sweat Your Way to Serenity

Increase in Respiratory Illness

Save More Than Food

Happy Holidays from ThriveOn



UNDERSTANDING SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW & HOW TO SEEK HELP

As seasons change and daylight diminishes, some individuals experience a notable shift, giving rise to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). This unique depression type typically emerges in fall or winter, overshadowing the joyous moments linked to the holiday season. This condition is believed to be triggered by the decrease in daylight and shorter days, leading to chemical changes in the brain associated with depressive symptoms.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Depression is different from feeling sad or unhappy. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away.

- Women are affected more often than men.
- Without treatment, depression can last weeks, months or years, but most people respond well to medication, therapy, or a combination of the two.
- Most people with clinical depression who seek treatment see improvement, usually within weeks.
- There are two types of SAD:
 - **Fall-onset:** This is also called “winter depression.” Symptoms of depression begin in the late fall to early winter months and ease during the summer months.
 - **Spring-onset:** This is also called “summer depression.” Symptoms of depression begin in late spring to early summer. This type is much less common.

TREATMENT APPROACHES FOR SAD

The treatments for “winter depression” and “summer depression” often differ, and may include any, or a combination, of the following:

- Exposure to sunlight - Spending time outside or near a window can help relieve symptoms.
- Light therapy - If increasing sunlight is not possible, exposure to a special light for a specific amount of time each day may help.
- Psychotherapy - Cognitive-behavioral or interpersonal therapy helps change the distorted views you may have of yourself and the environment around you. It can help you improve interpersonal relationship skills, and identify things that cause you stress as well as how to manage them.
- Antidepressants - These prescription medicines can help correct the chemical imbalance that may lead to SAD.

If you think you may be affected by seasonal affective disorder, be sure to get help through the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#). EAP offers confidential support with resources available 24/7. Services are available to all benefits-eligible employees and

their household. You are not required to be enrolled in the Franklin County Cooperative Health Plan to receive EAP services. Your EAP benefit allows 8 free counseling sessions per presenting problem per plan year. This benefit is provided at **no cost to you**. Call **1-800-354-3950** to be connected with a mental health clinician.

Don't hesitate to reach out and take proactive steps towards managing your mental health. Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, and you don't have to face Seasonal Affective Disorder alone.



SWEAT YOUR WAY TO SERENITY

BOOST MENTAL WELL-BEING WITH VIRTUAL FITNESS

Exercise isn't just for fitness; it's a mental well-being remedy. According to the [U.S. Department of Health](#), physical activity not only benefits the body but is crucial for maintaining mental well-being. Picture this: Your favorite workout class, but without the commute and on your own schedule. Beyond traditional approaches to prioritizing mental health, you are able to access free virtual fitness courses at the touch of a button, providing flexibility, fitness diversity, and the convenience to rejuvenate whenever suits you best.

Everyone has their unique way of recharging their sense of well-being, whether it's walking your dog, attending a gym, or a hike through the woods. These activities not only bring personal enjoyment but also contribute to an immediate improvement in mood and mental clarity. As the chilly winds discourage outdoor activities, why not embrace the warmth of your home with one of the virtual fitness classes offered through ThriveOn? No need to face the cold; your journey to well-being starts right in your living room.

By logging into fccThriveOn.com and clicking on the **Wellness Hub** tab you can access the virtual fitness class schedule. Attend free on-demand and live classes, including Zumba, Yoga, HIIT, and more.



INCREASE IN RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

CDC SYMPTOMS AND CARE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been monitoring reports of increased respiratory illness around the world including the flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) – which can cause pneumonia.

There are many ways to protect yourself from serious illness this fall and winter, including effective immunizations that protect against viral and bacterial diseases that can lead to these respiratory illnesses. For the first time ever, immunizations are available for three major fall and winter viral respiratory diseases – flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Immunization against these viruses remains the best protection for reducing the risk of serious illness, hospitalizations, long-term health impacts, and death.

If enrolled in the medical plan, you can receive the flu and COVID-19 vaccine with a \$0 copay at in-network pharmacies or in-network medical providers. You can check OptumRX.com for a participating pharmacy near you.

FLU

The [CDC](#) recommends everyone aged six months and older should get an updated flu vaccine. People aged 65 and older should get a high-dose or adjuvanted flu vaccine if available.

COVID-19

The [CDC](#) recommends, everyone aged five years and older should get one dose of the updated Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to be up to date and protect against serious illness from COVID-19. Children aged six months to four years need multiple doses of COVID-19 vaccine to be up to date, including at least one dose of the updated vaccine. People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised may get additional doses of the updated COVID-19 vaccine.

For more information and frequently asked questions regarding your COVID-19 coverage click [HERE](#).

RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

Individuals aged 60 and above are encouraged to talk with their doctor about whether an RSV vaccine is right for them. Qualified individuals, enrolled in the health plan can receive the vaccine at an in-network medical provider or pharmacy with no copay required.

All babies should receive protection from a serious RSV illness using one of two options:

- RSV vaccine for people who are 32-36 weeks pregnant, to protect their babies from severe RSV. This vaccine is usually given September through January.
- [RSV antibody immunization](#) for all babies younger than 8 months who are born during or entering their first RSV season. A small number of children ages 8-19 months who have a high risk of severe RSV illness should get an immunization during their second RSV season.

If you have any questions regarding coverage for vaccines, tests, or treatment, contact the Benefits Office at **614-525-5750**.



SAVE MORE THAN FOOD

FOOD STORAGE GUIDE FROM SWACO

SWACO, the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio, has announced a campaign focused on reducing food waste in Columbus by providing shoppers with a unique resource, the [Food Storage Guide](#), on how to extend the life of the fresh produce, dairy, and other foods they purchase.

Reducing food waste remains an important issue for Central Ohioans. In a public opinion poll conducted in 2022, 83 percent of residents were concerned with the amount of food wasted every day. A scannable QR code found on shopping carts and within the dairy and produce sections at 14 Central Ohio Giant Eagle and Market District locations can take shoppers to the digital Food Storage Guide. The guide includes proper food storage tips and more information about how to reduce food waste.

SWACO's nationally recognized [Save More Than Food](#) (SMTF) website offers ideas on making those simple and intentional steps a part of anyone's daily routine:

- [Fridge Night](#) prompts families to collect leftovers and look for creative ideas to bring them together. It also lets families properly freeze and date any leftovers a family can't use.
- [Label foods and leftovers](#) that need to be eaten soon or place them within eyesight.
- [Make leftovers new again](#) by visiting [SaveMoreThanFood.org](#) to find a leftover recipe to try.
- [Shopping more frequently](#) and with a list reduces cost and waste. Creating meal plans makes those trips much easier.
- [Proper food storage](#) allows herbs, milk, cheese, fruits, and vegetables to have a much longer life in refrigerators.

Overall, the SMTF campaign hopes to help reduce food waste by 50 percent by the year 2030. Residents and businesses alike can visit [savemorethanfood.org](#) for information to help reduce food waste at home and work. The Food Storage Guide can be accessed in supermarkets beginning today through the end of the year.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

FROM THRIVEON

During this joyous holiday season, we extend warm wishes to all, embracing the diversity of celebrations that bring light and happiness to each and every one of you.