Holiday depression—known as winter depression or seasonal affective disorder—affects up to 10 million Americans to some degree, according to Psychology Today.

### Beating the Holiday Blues

Stressing over the extra shopping trips or the added time preparing food is normal during the holiday season. However, when the shopping lists are checked off and dinner is served, if the following symptoms remain, it may be a good time to talk with a healthcare provider.

#### Some Reasons Why Winter Depression Occurs

- **Unrealistic expectations:** Holding an unrealistic goal for personal holiday cheer can lead to depression if expectations are not met.
- **Lack of self-care:** With the additional holiday chores, preparing for guests, and shoveling snow, people can forget and neglect their own needs during the holidays.
- **Social media:** Because the holidays mean social events, social media floods with fun and interesting pictures of gatherings. Scrolling through someone’s media feed and comparing yourself to that other person can contribute to feelings of loneliness or being “not good enough.”
- **Trying too much:** Pressure can build from wanting to have the “perfect holiday.” Like setting unrealistic expectations about holiday happiness, people often set unrealistic expectations for the holiday activities they want to do.

#### What You Can Do

- Seek social support
- Get to the gym
- Don’t spend as much time on social media
- Remember that it’s okay to feel overwhelmed