

The Holiday Blues

This isn't a holly jolly time of the year for everyone. The holidays actually trigger depression in some 17.6 million Americans each year. Holiday blues, however, is the least threatening form of depression. It is both common and treatable.

During this season many people begin to feel loaded down with the inherent demands, cooking, shopping and unmet expectations. Others may feel discouraged by the rampant commercialism of the holidays, or perhaps they're dealing with some grief issues. The result is an "empty" feeling, a lack of energy and interest, insomnia, hopelessness or crying jags. The symptoms vary, but it's common for the depressed

person to hide feelings behind a cheerful demeanor.

To treat holiday blues, it is sometimes helpful to re-evaluate what is really

important about the holidays.

Discussing your feelings with a close friend or therapist may also provide relief.

You may need to change your holiday

traditions altogether; for example, empty nesters may want to exchange gifts on a Caribbean beach rather than roast chestnuts over an open fire. As a last resort, there are anti-depressant drugs to aid with persistent symptoms. It's helpful to remember that this type of depression is usually only temporary.

