

Weather does affect our Mental Health!

But, how much?



As temperatures reach record lows, we are all feeling it! And, our psyche is no different! You'll experience the blues yes, but you can also feel boosts to your creativity and improved focus. Here is how cold weather affects your mood:

- **Feeling cold can boost your processing power.** While physical warmth does increase interpersonal connectivity, the more isolated feelings that come with experiencing cold have benefits, too. Certain types of creative tasks require *referential creativity*, and those are the ones you'll excel at when you're cold. **(Warm = ^ in relational (creating drawings), Cold = ^ in distant (abstract thinking).)**
- **Rain can jumpstart a craving for carbs.** For many parts of the world, the winter is the rainy season, so soggy weather can accompany cold temperatures. The combination can easily cause your mood to dip, and when this happens, your body starts to crave carbs. Eating pasta or bread will raise your body temperature and provide you with a momentary increase in serotonin — which is then followed by a precipitous drop. **Yes, your body does need carbs, but to prevent that crash, reach for veggies like sweet potatoes and pumpkin, which are starchy but also rich in other nutrients.**
- **Low humidity can help you focus.** Cold air holds less moisture than warm air, so when the temps drop in the winter, so do humidity levels. **The lower humidity can actually increase concentration and decrease sleepiness.**
- **Cloudiness can defog your memory.** There is actually an upside to cloudy, rainy days. In a recent study, negativity coming from cloudy weather, resulted in improving people's memory. Shoppers were polled after coming out of a retail store: during cloudy weather, shoppers remembered seven times as many of the specific, unusual objects (placed in the checkout lane) as people did on sunny days. **Distracted by the beautiful weather for sure!**
- **Cold weather doesn't affect everyone equally.** Maybe you feel energized in the winter and lethargic in the summer. We all have different emotional profiles when it comes to weather. Summer lovers have better moods during sunny weather, and vice versa. **Some people are seemingly unaffected, and don't show strong associations between weather and mood at all.**

Remember that the weather blues, whether in winter (or summer) are only temporary, and each season bring a chance to improve your mood. If you feel overwhelmed and need someone to talk to, give Best Care EAP a call at **402-354-8000** or **800-801-4182** or email eap@bestcareeap.org. **Counselors are just a phone call away.**