

Spring is coming!



It's the final week of February, could Spring be just around the corner? We're just three weekends away until the start of Daylight Saving Time (March 14) and since our shortest day back in December we've gained almost 2 hours of daylight back.

Longer daylight hours

While the weather may not be cooperating all that well in terms of getting a spring feel in the air, most stores have lots of spring items in them so at least psychologically our minds follow suit and ideas of spring activities pop up. There is another thing that changes when spring gets closer...our own bodies sense signs of spring and it has nothing to do with warmer temperatures. There are real things that are going on within your body now that are signs that spring is getting closer. In your eyes, the retina senses subtle changes in the amount of daylight which is transmitted to the brain via the optic nerve. This causes hormonal changes within your body and an adjustment in melatonin which affects both sleep patterns and mood swings. The longer nights and extended darkness of the winter season makes your body produce more melatonin which tends to make us sleep more. As the amount of daylight increases, our energy levels go up because the melatonin levels tend to decrease.

Less cravings for carbs

Another sign that our bodies sense spring is getting closer is that we start to feel a lesser craving for carbs. In winter, our bodies tend to take on hibernation mode to help keep us warm in the colder months. Weight gain in wintertime is common and it tends to drag our energy levels down. But as spring approaches with the daylight gains now in excess of 3+ minutes per day, our energy levels tend to build. We tend to get out of our winter-time hibernation mode with the craving for carbs decreasing. Our increasing energy levels translate into wanting to do more things throughout the day. Also, our sleep patterns adjust downward with the increase in energy.

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While Mother Nature may be slow to bring us true Spring weather this year, it's no illusion that we as humans are all sensing that Spring is now closer on the horizon than just a month ago. Even if our bodies can't feel the warmth just yet, our INNER CLOCK IS and we're definitely starting to sense the hints of Spring.

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.**