

# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

## MONTCLAIR HEALTH DEPARTMENT

### Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges: Uniting for Progress on World AIDS Day 2023

December 1st, 2023 marks the 35th annual recognition of World AIDS Day, a day we stand together to reflect, educate, and advocate for a world without HIV/AIDS. This year, the theme is "End Inequalities. End AIDS," emphasizing the collective responsibility to address the disparities that contribute to this global health challenge.

Advances in medical research, increased accessibility to treatment, and efforts to reduce stigma have transformed the landscape. However, challenges persist, and the need for awareness and action remains critical. This World AIDS Day, let's focus on education as a powerful tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS. By dispelling myths and providing accurate information about prevention, testing, and treatment, we empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions about their health. Take a look below at some common misconceptions about HIV/ AIDS.



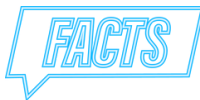
**HIV/AIDS is a death sentence**



**HIV-positive women should not have children**



**Engaging in unprotected sex is ok if you and your partner are both positive**



**With early diagnosis and intervention, over 35 FDA-approved medications, known as anti-retroviral therapy, can allow HIV-positive individuals to lead healthy lives.**

**HIV positive women can have healthy babies with the help of doctors and nurses. They should discuss treatment options and seek early prenatal care to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission.**

**When partners have different strains of HIV, superinfection can occur. This can happen when two variants of the virus merge, leading to changes in its genetic makeup. Using a condom between sexual acts and staying consistent with medication can reduce the chances of superinfection.**

### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

**Advocate for Change** - Push for policies that promote inclusivity and equal access to healthcare. Support increased funding for research, community programs, and initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of HIV/AIDS.

**Destigmatize for a Healthier Society** - Break down the barriers of stigma to create an environment where individuals feel safe to seek testing and treatment. Challenge misconceptions, encourage open conversations, and foster compassion to build a judgement-free society.

**Community Engagement** - Participate in local events, webinars, and outreach activities organized to recognize World AIDS Day. Promote educational materials in your circles, and contribute to the global conversation on social media using the official hashtag #WorldAIDSday2023.

**Test to Save Lives** - Regular HIV testing is a cornerstone in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS. Encourage friends, family, and community members to know their status and access the support they need. Testing is not just a health measure; it's a step towards breaking the chain of transmission.

Together, we can contribute to a healthier, more informed world. This month, let's remember and honor those who have lost their lives to AIDS-related illnesses. Their stories inspire our commitment to a future where HIV/AIDS is eradicated, and everyone can lead a healthy, fulfilling life. In the spirit of unity, education, and advocacy, let's make World AIDS Day 2023 a catalyst for positive change.

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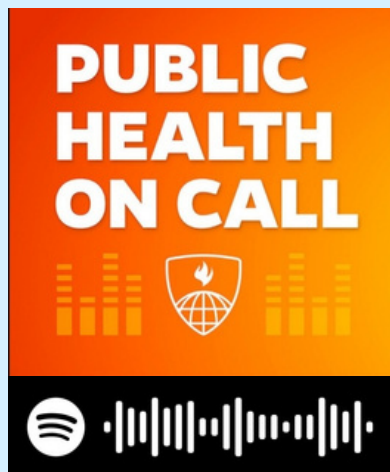
It's More than Just the Winter Blues - Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

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References: <https://www.hiv.gov/blog/world-aids-day-35-remember-and-commit/>  
<https://capus.dph.ga.gov/ehe/myths/>

# Listen & Learn



## Public Health On Call Podcast Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

### Episode 695 - The Shortage of Stimulant Medications for Kids with ADHD

Stimulant medications can significantly increase the quality of life for kids with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Johns Hopkins psychiatrist Dr. Rheanna Platt talks with Dr. Josh Sharfstein about how a shortage of these meds is impacting patients and their families. They discuss what's behind the shortages and address questions about whether overuse of these drugs among adults is a contributor.



## TED Health

### Can You Change Your Sleep Schedule?

An early bird rises with the sun, springing out of bed abuzz with energy. Meanwhile, a night owl groggily rises much later, not hitting their stride until late in the day. How many people are truly night owls or early birds? And are our sleep schedules predetermined at birth, or can we change them? Explore how our circadian systems act as internal clocks to keep our bodies functioning properly. This TED-Ed lesson was directed by Avi Ofer, narrated by Alexandra Panzer and the music is by André Aires.

## HOW CAN I LISTEN?

To listen to any of the podcasts listed above, search the name of the podcast in the Spotify app or website.

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Open the Spotify app and scan the "Spotify Code" on the images above

# WINTER WONDERLAND WELLNESS: *Navigating the Season with Health & Home in Mind*



## **Baby, it's cold outside! Keep your home toasty and secure with these simple steps:**

- Give your home some love by sealing up drafts, installing insulation, and fixing leaky roofs and gutters.
- Bring in the pros to inspect your heating system, check your fireplace and chimney for any blockages, and have some backup heating options in case of an emergency.
- Don't forget to pop in smoke detectors throughout the house, including on every floor and in each bedroom. Test the batteries regularly and swap them out twice a year.
- Keep your family safe from carbon monoxide by installing a detector and knowing the signs of CO poisoning: headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.



## **It's time to winterize your vehicle, folks!**

- Keep your radiator and tire tread in tip-top shape, and swap out your regular tires for some all-weather or snow tires. While you're at it, use a wintertime formula in your windshield washer, and make sure your gas tank is loaded up to avoid ice in the tank.
- Don't forget to pack a winter survival kit with all the essentials: a warm coat, snacks, water, jumper cables, a tire pump, flashlights, maps, compass, radio, batteries, and a first-aid kit.



## **Gear up for power outages and Mother Nature's crazy stunts!**

- In case of weather related emergencies, stock up on easy-to-store, nonperishable food and drinking water.
- Make sure your phone is charged, and upgrade your emergency kits this year with battery-powered gadgets, first-aid kits, and extra medications. Consider keeping cat litter or sand for icy walkways.
- Stay up-to-date on the current and forecasted weather conditions when planning your travels.
- Keep all grills, stoves, and generators outside and far from home sweet home to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. If you do hear the CO alarm's warning song - evacuate the home and dial 911 pronto!



## **Navigating the Chill: Tips for Traveling this Winter**

- Before you embark on your holiday travels, take a peek at the weather forecast and steer clear of nonessential travel if National Weather Service advisories have been issued. If you absolutely must go, let someone know your route and ETA.
- If you get stuck or stranded, make sure your car is visible to rescue teams, keep cozy by bundling up or huddling with other people, and stay put unless you spy a safer haven nearby (no more than 100 yards away). Try Running the engine and heater for 10 minutes every hour will keep you toasty but don't forget to crack a window for air flow. Double-check that there is no snow blocking the exhaust pipe to reduce the chances of carbon monoxide poisoning.



## **Dress to impress the great outdoors!**

- Bundle up with light, warm layers, mittens, hats, and scarves. Opt for jackets or coats that are tightly woven and wind-resistant. Finally, find a nice pair of waterproof kicks to ensure maximum coziness and protection from the fierce cold.

# It's More Than Just the Winter Blues - Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

## WHAT IS SAD?

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that occurs during specific seasons, typically in winter when there are fewer daylight hours.

## WHAT CAUSES SAD?

- Reduced sunlight exposure affecting melatonin and serotonin levels
- Disruption of circadian rhythms
- Genetic predisposition
- Changes in neurotransmitter levels

## WHO IS HIGH RISK?

- Individuals living in regions with less sunlight
- Women, who are more commonly affected than men
- People with a family history of SAD or other forms of depression



## WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT SAD?

- Increase exposure to natural light
- Create a well-lit and comfortable living environment
- Stay socially connected
- Plan enjoyable activities during the winter months

## RECOGNIZING SYMPTOMS:

- Persistent low mood
- Lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in sleep patterns (oversleeping or insomnia)
- Weight gain or loss
- Loss of interest in activities

## COPING STRATEGIES:

- Light therapy (exposure to a bright light that mimics natural sunlight)
- Regular exercise
- Spending time outdoors
- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy
- Medication in severe cases

## Montclair Health Department Immunization Clinics



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Montclair Health & Human Services

Montclair Health Department offers immunization clinics on the first and third Tuesdays of every month.

To make an appointment, please call 973-509-4970 or email [mginter@montclairnjusa.org](mailto:mginter@montclairnjusa.org).

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