

Happy New Year!

あけましておめでとうございます
akemashite omedetougozaimasu



Happy new year and welcome to 2020! We hope that you had a refreshing year-end

holiday.

Be safe as you enjoy the new years festivities this January!



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Don't be SAD! 季節性感情障害の対策

After some snow fall late in the season, it's finally starting to feel like winter here in Tokachi. For many foreign residents without families, it is very easy to feel down this time of year. In this month's issue of Obihiro Pioneer we will introduce seasonal affective disorder (often shortened to "SAD") and how you can keep it from affecting you this winter.

What is SAD?

According to the US National Institute for Mental Health, seasonal affective disorder, or SAD (季節性感情障害 *kisetsusei kanjo shogai*), is a type of depression that occurs with the change of seasons. SAD is often associated with winter. Common symptoms include:

- Feeling depressed most of the day
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Experiencing changes in appetite or weight
- Having low energy
- Social withdrawal

While most individuals would not be clinically diagnosed with SAD, it is not uncommon to feel some of these symptoms over the course of Hokkaido's long winter.



What causes SAD?

While the exact cause of SAD is unknown there are a few common occurrences amongst people with SAD:

- They have trouble regulating serotonin, a chemical which affects mood
- They may overproduce melatonin, which regulates sleep
- They may produce less vitamin D, the insufficiency of which is often associated with depression

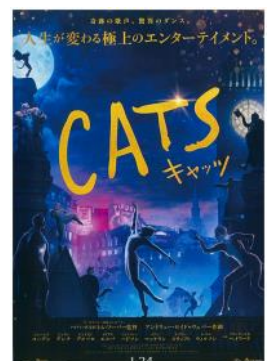
What all three have in common is a chemical imbalance in the individual.



Don't be SAD!
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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
1/8 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volleyball Night 国際ミニバレー・ナイト Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport. TIRC Multi-purpose Hall Fee: Free of charge Organized by the Tokachi International Association	
1/18 (Sat) 18:30-20:00	77th International Talk (Vietnam) 第77回インターナショナル・トーク(ベトナム) Learn more about the countries of the world. This month our guest is Khang from Vietnam. He will introduce his country and share more about Vietnamese culture and interesting facts about Vietnam including an introduction to the "Floating Market" of his hometown. Participants can interact with the guest through a quiz game and free conversation. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For junior high school students and older. Organized by the City of Obihiro	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
1/25 (Sat) 10:30-12:00	57th Kids Playground 第57回キッズ・プレイグラウンド Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month, teachers from a local English language school will interact with the children through song and dance. TIRC Multi-purpose Hall Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For children 0-6 years old and their parents/guardians. Organized by the City of Obihiro	
1/12 (Sun) 10:00-15:00	Winter Vacation Waku Waku Classroom 冬休みわくわく教室 Fun experiments and crafts will be ready for kids on winter vacation from school. No registration or fee required.	Obihiro Children's Hall 帯広市児童会館 0155-24-2434
1/19 (Sun)	2020 Ecology Park Winter Festival 2020エコパ冬まつり Enjoy family friendly winter activities including an ice slide and snowman making contest.	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク財団 0155-32-6780 http://tokachi-ecopark/jp/
1/19 (Sun) 10:00-13:00	Shimizu "Shakoi" (cold) Festival 清水しゃこい祭 Beat the cold this winter at the Shimizu Shakoi Festival. There will be a number of events taking place both indoors and outdoors. Be sure to sign up for the big event, human "banba" sled pulling contest (for elementary students only, prior registration required).	Shimizu Town Culture Center Shimizu Central Park 清水町文化センター 清水中央公園 清水長商工会少年部 0155-62-2208

Don't be SAD! 季節性感情障害の対策

Making it to Summer

※The following are suggestions to help with symptoms related to depression. If you are seriously concerned with your mental well-being, please consult with a medical professional.

With the days being shorter in winter, most would probably want to curl up in bed and try to hibernate until spring. Since we aren't bears, here are some ways to help keep maintain your mood even in winter:



Exercise regularly!



Exercising releases endorphins, which are chemicals in your brain that make you feel more positive. It is said that the effects are similar to morphine, a painkiller.

Exercising with a friend or to some upbeat music will help you enjoy your exercise more.

While indoor exercise facilities are aplenty, you can make the most of the winter season by taking up winter sports to keep yourself moving. The Tokachi area is best known for its speed skating and has a number of rinks open to the public.



Interact with others

If you are feeling down, you can let out your thoughts and concerns to others. Even if you aren't feeling particularly sad, you can enjoy activities even more with friends. Even just being in the company of others will help to remind you that you are not alone this winter.

Make the effort to go out with friends, or better yet, bring them over! 鍋パーティー *nabe paatii* or hot pot parties are a great way to warm up with having a fun time with friends.

Go outside!

Tokachi is lucky to have some on the longest hours of sunlight in Hokkaido (even in winter!). Being out in the natural sunlight is known to increase production of vitamin D, which we previously mentioned the lack of which is associated with depression. Kill two birds with one stone by trying some outdoor activities such as snow shoeing or cross-country skiing.

Many public facilities offer lessons for beginners. Please check online or with your local municipality office for more information.



As Hokkaido's winter takes up nearly half of the year, it is very easy to feel down and/or alone this time of year. Please make sure to take care of your health and consult a professional if needed. Don't let SAD get the best of you this winter!

Resources:

Gupta, P.K. Sharma, V.K. Garg, A.K. Singh, S.C. Mondal
Role of serotonin in seasonal affective disorder

Nimh.nih.gov. (2019). *NIMH » Seasonal Affective Disorder*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/seasonal-affective-disorder/index.shtml> [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

nhs.uk. (2019). *How to be happier*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/feel-better-and-happy/> [Accessed 23 Dec. 2019].

Movies At Cinema Taiyo, in Obihiro

(Nishi 3, Minami 11)
Tel: (0155) 20-1525

Times and movies are subject to change! (for space reasons not all movies are listed)
To confirm, call or check online at: http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml



Title	Language	Dates
Frozen 2 (アナと雪の女王2/Ana to yuki no joō 2)	Jpn Dub	All Month
Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker (スカイウォーカーの夜明け/ Sukai uōkaa no yoake)	Jpn Sub/Dub	All Month
Ford vs Ferarri	Jpn Sub	From 10th
Cats	Jpn Sub/Dub	From 24th
Bad Boys for Life	TBD	From 31st

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
1/25 (Sat)	Hombestu Bean Throwing Night (<i>mame maki</i>) ほんべつ豆まかナイト Join the bean town in celebrating the Japanese tradition. Look forward to a myriad of bean themed activities.	Hombetsu Town Gymnasium 本別町体育館 本別町商工会 0156-22-2529
1/31-2/2 (Fri-Sun)	57th Annual Obihiro Ice Festival 第57回 おびひろ氷まつり Make the most of Obihiro's cold winter by heading to the Ice Festival at Midori Gaoka Park! Enjoy ice activities and warm up by watching the fireworks at night.	Midori Gaoka Park 緑ヶ丘公園一帯 帯広のまつり推進委員会 0155-22-8600 http://obihiro-icefes.com/
1/26 (Sun)	Fish Day 魚の日 Every month in Hiroo town (twice in December!), there is "Fish Day", during which fish and other ingredients taken from the sea are used to make healthy dishes native to the north. A variety of products are on sale for the event.	Hiroo Town Fisheries Cooperative Food Division 広尾漁業協同組合食品部 01558-2-3202 http://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/sr/ske/osazu/oz06gok/gok032.htm

Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Tokachi Plaza, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp (click on "Information for Foreigners")

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