



Prairie Faith Parish Nurse News~~February 2023

Following Jesus' example, we exist to promote physical, emotional, and spiritual care.

Does Winter Have You Feeling Blue?

A touch of winter blues is common, with many of us experiencing a mood shift during the colder, darker days of winter, and you may find yourself feeling lethargic and "down". Some research-backed suggestions for improving your mood during the winter include:



1. **Get moving!** Getting 20-30 minutes of physical activity at least four times a week has been shown to improve mood. Get a gym membership, get outdoors to walk during the warmest part of the day, dance around the house to music.
2. **Set your alarm and stick to a sleep routine!** Tempting as it might be to sleep in on dark mornings, it's best to stick with a regular sleep schedule which means waking up at the same times on weekdays and weekends. Try to allow for at least seven hours of sleep every night for your overall health.
3. **Laugh a little!** Laughter actually stimulates processes in your brain that counter depressive symptoms. Watch a funny movie or show, read a humorous book, get together to visit with a friend that shares your same sense of humor.
4. **Stick to healthy foods!** Avoid the common urge in the winter to overindulge in "comfort foods", such as starchy or sweet foods. Eat a balanced diet of lean proteins, fruits and vegetables and whole grains. Avoid the use of alcohol, which is a depressant.
5. **Give yourself manageable tasks to accomplish!** It's important to build activities into your day—even chores like cleaning the house—that will give you a sense of competence and accomplishment. According to one psychological theory, we all have an innate need to feel competent in order to also grow emotionally, have a sense of integrity, and maintain wellbeing. And balance the hard work with little things that bring you pleasure, and don't let your to-do list get too out of hand.
6. **Let the sunlight in during the day at home or at work!** Open your curtains or shades, and spend some time sitting in the sunlight.
7. **Plan something to look forward to!** A short trip, a get-together with friends or family, or a trip to a museum.
8. **Get outside!** Specifically, the extra sunlight will help you, and being outside in nature, even just a walk over your lunch hour, can lift your mood. Bundle up and try a walk out in the country, take some time to sit in the sunshine and listen to the silence, pay attention to the sounds and sights of nature.
9. **Help others!** Visit someone who has difficulty getting out and about. Take up a new volunteer role in your church or community.
10. **Listen to cheerful and upbeat music!** Try combining this choice with a physical workout or your daily household chores.

It's normal to have some days when you feel down. But if you feel down for days at a time and you can't get motivated to do activities you normally enjoy, see your physician to discuss the possibility of **Seasonal Affective Disorder**, or **SAD**. SAD is an actual medical diagnosis that has been linked to a biochemical imbalance in the brain prompted by shorter daylight hours and less sunlight in the winter. SAD is more common in people living far from the equator where there are fewer daylight hours in the winter. It is time to make an appointment with your physician if you experience these signs and symptoms:

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Having low energy
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling hopeless, worthless or guilty
- Having problems with sleeping
- Experiencing changes in your appetite or weight
- Having thoughts of not wanting to live

The good news is that there are treatment options for this condition, including talking to a therapist, light therapy, & sometimes medications, in addition to following the lifestyle choices described above. It's wise to seek help sooner rather than later.

(Sources of information include: Mayo Clinic, Harvard Health, University of Missouri Health)

It can be overwhelming when you or your loved one receives a dementia diagnosis.

You do not have to do this alone.

The Rural Kansas Community Care Ecosystem is a newly formed partnership of agencies designed to help north central and northwest Kansans and their caregivers who are living with Alzheimer's or a related dementia. The rural partners include OCCK, Inc. (Salina), Republic County Hospital, Garden City Community College, and Prairie Faith Parish Nurse Ministry—who then connect people and their physicians to staff who have specialized training in dementia based out of KU Alzheimer's Disease Research Center.

Knowledge is Empowering:

- ✓ Learn about early detection
- ✓ Establish a baseline screening
- ✓ Address emotions about the diagnosis
- ✓ Consider sharing your diagnosis with others and how to cope with their reactions
- ✓ How to get the most out of your partnership with your physician
- ✓ Discover simple tools to manage changes such as short-term memory loss and speech issues
- ✓ Learn meaningful ways of staying engaged and communicating
- ✓ Explore research opportunities
- ✓ Connect with others who also have this or a similar diagnosis
- ✓ Prepare for the future



For more information, you may contact Nancy at 785-743-2005 (please leave a message).



A prayer shawl is a tangible gift representing the many and continuing prayers for comfort, caring, healing and love offered for an individual experiencing a difficult time for various reasons—serious illness, grief, loss, emotional trials, or spiritual upheaval in their lives. If you know of someone in the community who might be comforted by receiving a prayer shawl or blanket, please contact Nancy. There are several options for delivery of a prayer shawl to your friend, neighbor, or family member—you may request one to be prepared and then gift it yourself, request the pastor to deliver it, or request Nancy to deliver one.



Lord, In the midst of Winter, when the days are cold and wind can pierce, remind us of the warmth of your love.

In the midst of Winter, when days are short, dawn comes late, and dusk arrives early, remind us that in the darkness your light still shines.

In the midst of Winter, when the flowers of spring still lie hidden in the earth, when leaves are off the trees, and the world can seem bleak, remind us that Easter is but a short time away.

And when in our lives we feel as if we are experiencing a season of winter, reach out to us with the power of your resurrection so that we may feel the warmth of your love and see your light that alone can take away the darkness of our soul. Amen.

(~Prayer by Cal Wick~)



The parish nurse ministry serves the community, regardless of any church affiliation. Feel free to call or email to: schedule a confidential appointment to discuss your health/wellness questions, schedule transportation to a medical/dental/counseling appointment if you need a ride, request a prayer shawl for someone in the community going through a difficult time, locate community health resources, request other parish nurse work, or discuss your ideas for the health ministry! 😊

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785-743-2005 (leave a message, please)