Wintertime brings extra challenges to people who already struggle with mood disorders. Many people experience added feelings of anxiety, depression, or worthlessness during the holiday season. You are not alone. Unrealistic expectations, changes in family, illness, or sentimental memories surrounding the holiday season can often make mood symptoms worse.

The “holiday blues” are a vicious cycle, “I feel down, but it’s the holidays - I should be happy, but I’m not. And that makes me feel even more miserable inside.” There are several factors to consider when suffering from “holiday blues.” Lack of sunlight, change in routine, increase in alcohol use at parties, feeling inadequate due to comparing yourself to family/friends, not seeing family and friends for the holiday, and financial stressors are all factors that could seriously affect your mood.

Some symptoms of holiday blues are feeling overly tired, having tight muscles that could lead to headaches, and feeling more frustrated, lonely or sad than normal. Holiday blues tend to be short term and temporary. If you find that your symptoms last past the winter months/holiday season, please talk to your health care provider. You may be experiencing clinical anxiety or depression that can get worse if left untreated.

(continued on page 2)
To avoid feeling down during the winter months and especially the holidays, follow these simple steps:

1. Make sure you get 6-8 hours of sleep every night.
2. Stay with your normal routine as much as you can.
3. Stay active. Get exercise daily, even if it is a short walk or routine in the house.
4. Find time for yourself by doing something you enjoy. Relax with music, a bath, reading, or other activity you enjoy.
5. Spend time with friends and family. Get out of the house and be social with caring, supportive people.
6. Keep your expectations about the holiday reasonable. This includes budget, events, and activities you can attend or participate in.
7. Make simple to do lists that incorporate the above.

If you’ve tried the above and your mood doesn’t improve, don’t wait for the holidays to be over. Talk to your health care provider about other options to help you.

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Why is Dental Care So Important?

Early check-ups help avoid cavities. Cavities can lead to pain, trouble focusing and other medical issues. Children with healthy teeth can chew food easily, speak clearly and smile with confidence.

Regular dental visits can do more than keep your smile attractive. Your teeth can tell the dentist a lot about your overall health. Dentists can tell if you may be developing a disease like diabetes.

Research shows that gum disease may lead to other health problems. This can include stroke and heart disease. Also, women with gum disease are more likely to have pre-term, low birth-weight babies.

It is important that dental care starts at a young age. The first dental visit is recommended at the time of the first tooth, and no later than 12 months of age. The most common interval to see your dentist is every six months; however, some people may need more or fewer check-ups, based upon past medical and x-ray findings.

To protect your oral health, practice good oral hygiene every day:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- Floss daily.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Limit between-meal snacks.
- Replace your toothbrush every three to four months, or sooner if bristles are frayed.
- Schedule regular dental check-ups.

Health behaviors that can lead to poor oral health include:

- Tobacco use.
- Too much alcohol use.
- Poor food choices.

Contact your dentist as soon as an oral health problem arises. Remember, taking care of your oral health is an investment in your overall health.

Manage Your Medicines

Taking medicine like the doctor tells you is very important! It helps keep your, or your child’s conditions controlled. Medicines can prevent flare-ups and reduce symptoms. This can keep you from having to go to the emergency room or be admitted to the hospital.

Your doctor wants to know what you think. If your doctor starts a new medicine, or stops a medicine you or your child have been taking, talk with your doctor about what you think is best.

Here are some tips to manage your medicines. Follow these same tips for your child’s medicines.

1. Make a list of current medicines. Keep this list with you all the time. Be sure to include all prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Be sure to include any vitamins or supplements you take. This includes herbal supplements.
2. Show the list to the doctor at each appointment. Update the list if the doctor changes your medicines.
3. Always plan ahead to get refills. Don’t wait and run out of any of your medicines.
4. Set up reminders so you don’t forget to take your medicines. You may want to set up your medicines in a pill organizer every week. This will help you keep track of the medicines you need to take every day.
5. If you have trouble organizing your medicines, talk to your pharmacist. They are glad to help you.
6. It helps to use one pharmacy for all your medicines. That way the pharmacist will know about ALL the medicines you take. They can check for any negative interactions between your medicines.

TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST

Your doctor and pharmacist will help you understand all the medicines you or your child take. They will answer your questions like:

1. What are they for?
2. What are the reasons I should take them?
3. What are the reasons I should stop taking them?
4. How should I take them?
5. What time of day should I take them?
6. How often should I take them?
7. Will I need to continue taking them once I feel better?
8. What are the side effects of the medicine?

Always ask! You need to know. You and your children will stay healthier and safer when you get all your questions answered.

Behavioral Health: Problem Drinking

It’s not always easy to see when your drinking has crossed the line from moderate or social use to problem drinking. If you drink alcohol to cope with problems or to avoid feeling bad, you may have a problem with alcohol. Alcohol abuse can sneak up on you. It’s important to know the warning signs. Signs of at-risk drinking include:

• Feeling guilty or ashamed about your drinking.
• Lying to others or hiding your drinking habits.
• Having friends or family members who are worried about your drinking.
• Needing to drink in order to relax or feel better.
• “Blacking out” or forgetting what you did while you were drinking.
• Regularly drinking more than you intended.
• Drinking more or longer than you intended.

If you have warning signs, take steps to cut back. Understanding the problem is the first step to overcoming it. Go to MDwise.org/wellnesstools and click “problem drinking” at the top to learn more.
Appropriate ER Use

No one likes to spend hours in an emergency room. Preventive care like annual check-ups, hand washing, age appropriate vaccinations and resting when sick can reduce the chance of common illnesses turning into emergencies.

You should call your doctor whenever you have questions or need care. This is the best way to help your doctor take care of you and your children. However, if it is an emergency, do not wait to call your doctor first! Call 911 or go straight to the nearest hospital emergency room.

If you are far away from home, you should still call your doctor if you need care. They can help you get routine or urgent health care. If you cannot afford the long distance call to your doctor, we can help. You can call MDwise free of charge. We will help you reach your doctor.

Try not to use the ER for anything but true emergencies. If you are not sure if it is an emergency, call your doctor for advice. Your doctor has someone who can help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you hear a recorded message when you call, listen carefully for instructions. Have a pencil or pen and paper ready when you call.

Prevent Lead Poisoning

Lead is a natural element. It can be found in the air, soil and water. Lead can be very harmful. Exposure can lead to lead poisoning. Children under 6 years-old are especially at risk due to their developing bodies and brains. Pregnant women and their unborn babies are also at risk.

High levels of lead in the body can slow growth, cause learning and behavior problems, and possibly permanent brain damage. Traces of lead can be found in dust, air, toys, paint, and other household items. There are ways that you can prevent lead poisoning and steps to take if you are seeing the signs and symptoms.

How can you help prevent Lead Poisoning?

The goal is to prevent lead poisoning from happening. Here are some ways to help ensure your child is protected:

- Make sure your child is tested.
  - Children should be tested at 12-months and 24-months of age.
  - Test children age 3-6 years if they have never been tested.
- Run tap water before using it.
- Wash your children’s hands and toys regularly.
- Use wipes and wet-mop floors regularly.
- Watch for peeling paint and lead pipes in older homes.

If you are not sure your child has been tested, talk to your MDwise doctor. Your doctor can do the testing. If you are not sure who your child’s doctor is, call MDwise customer service. We can even help you schedule an appointment.

Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Lead Prevention
Every year a survey is sent to member homes in the Spring. It asks members about services they get from MDwise. We use a separate company to do the survey so that members who respond are kept private. MDwise does not know which members answered the questions. A total of 1,162 members answered our survey to help us serve you better.

In general, MDwise members were happy with their doctors and with the MDwise health plan. Parents of our Hoosier Healthwise members sometimes felt differently than our Healthy Indiana Plan members. Here are some areas members thought we did well by program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hoosier Healthwise Children</th>
<th>Healthy Indiana Plan Adults</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience with personal doctor.</td>
<td>Getting an appointment with a specialist as soon as they are needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor talking about ways to prevent illness.</td>
<td>Doctor’s explaining things in an understandable way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor informed and up-to-date about care from other providers.</td>
<td>Doctor’s discussing tobacco cessation medications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s explaining things in an understandable way.</td>
<td>Treated with respect by customer service.</td>
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</table>

Members found things they thought could be better:

• Customer service.
• Being able to get care quickly.
• Coordination of care with other doctors.
• Experience with specialists.

MDwise members were asked whether they or their child had scheduled an appointment for a check-up or routine care. An average of 69% of members said they had made an appointment to see their doctor in the past six months.

Adult members also told us whether they smoke or use tobacco. 13.5% of Hoosier Healthwise adults and 40% of HIP adults said they use tobacco.

Only 36% of adults in Hoosier Healthwise and HIP said that they got the flu vaccine. Remember that the flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older each year!

Here are some important things to remember about your health care:

• Check-ups are important for everyone in the family. This should happen at least once each year for those age three years and older. Babies and children under the age of three need appointments more often. See the MDwise member handbook for more details.
• Always call your doctor first when you need medical care. Your doctor has someone who can help you 24 hours a day.

• NURSEon-call can answer your health questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call customer service and choose option #4.
• If you smoke or use tobacco, talk to your doctor about quitting. There are programs and medications to help you. Go to MDwise.org/smoke-free for more information.

Remember that you can earn MDwiseREWARDS! MDwiseREWARDS points can be earned for many activities like getting check-ups or completing a tobacco cessation program. You can cash in your points for gift cards. Go to MDwise.org/MDwiseREWARDS to learn more.

Our goal for next year is to improve all areas of service. This will allow us to serve our members better in the future. We will work to improve the things you thought could be better.
Filing an Appeal

If you do not agree with a MDwise decision about your health services, you have the right to ask for further review. This includes if MDwise has decided that a request for services cannot be approved. You will receive written notification of the decision. This notice will include your right to appeal. It will include the steps to start an appeal. You can ask someone else, such as your doctor, to file an appeal on your behalf. For more information on filing a grievance or an appeal, please visit MDwise.org/help.

Check Out MDwise.org

The MDwise website is a great resource for members. Do you know what you can find on the MDwise website? On the website you can find information about your health plan benefits and services, MDwise special programs, and myMDwise. You can also find HELPlink, behavioral health resources, and so much more. Check out MDwise.org today!

Provider Network

MDwise is always working to make your health care better. You may have heard about upcoming changes to our network. In 2019, MDwise members will have access to one statewide network of doctors, as well as a larger selection of providers.

Get Your FREE Gift Card!

You don’t have to sign up for MDwiseREWARDS to earn points. You are automatically enrolled. Earn points for a variety of activities, like going to your doctor appointments. Then shop for gift cards with your points. Go to MDwise.org/MDwiseREWARDS to learn more.
Get Your Flu Shots

The flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu. The next best way to prevent the flu is washing your hands. Washing your hands doesn’t mean a light drizzle of water. To prevent the spread of disease, always use soap and warm water – and rub hands for 15 to 20 seconds. To keep track of the time sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice while rubbing. If water is not readily available, you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Although they are less thorough at killing germs than traditional soap and water.

Handwashing is especially important at certain times. Always wash your hands:

- Before and after preparing or handling food.
- Before eating.
- After changing diapers.
- After using the bathroom.
- After sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- After touching an animal or animal waste.
- After handling garbage.
- Before and after treating a wound.
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick.

It’s quick. It’s easy. And it will help keep you and your family out of the emergency room with the flu this season!

Questions?
Go to our website at MDwise.org.

Si quiere que le mandemos esta información en español, favor de llamar a nuestro departamento de servicio al cliente de MDwise. También puede encontrar esta información en español en nuestra página web en MDwise.org. Gracias.

SMOKE-free

Earn MDwiseREWARDS points for being SMOKE-free.

If you smoke or use tobacco you can earn MDwiseREWARDS points for trying to quit. To earn points, you must complete a cessation program.

Examples of some programs include:
- Indiana’s Tobacco Quitline.
- Baby and Me Tobacco Free.
- A program through your hospital or clinic.

Ask your doctor about the programs they recommend. Once completed, ask for a certificate or letter of completion. Then send a copy to MDwise by mail, fax or email to get your points.

Mail to:
MDwiseREWARDS
P.O. Box 441423
Indianapolis, IN 46244

Fax (toll-free) to: 1-844-759-8551

Email to: rewards@mdwise.org

You can get tips for quitting at MDwise.org/wellness/smokefree.

For further advice and support, call Indiana’s Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669). It’s available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also go to quitnowindiana.com.
Getting Help With a Problem

The quality of service you get from MDwise is important to us. If you have a concern or are not satisfied, call MDwise customer service. You must do this within 60 days of when the problem occurred.

If you are dissatisfied with a service you receive, a MDwise customer service representative will file a grievance. They will try to solve your concerns right away. We will follow up with a letter within 20 business days.

In an emergency, grievances will be handled quickly. This is called an “expedited” grievance. If your case can be expedited, we will review your case and notify you of a decision within 48 hours.

Affirmative Statement About Incentives

MDwise medical management makes prior authorization decisions based on appropriateness of care and coverage rules. MDwise medical management does not receive incentives or rewards, financial or otherwise, for making denial decisions and are not rewarded for making UM decisions that decrease utilization of services by MDwise members.