

# Can Holidays Cure Depression? The Impact on Mental Health

*Can holidays cure depression? Understand the ups and downs of mental health during the holiday season, and get the help you need to enjoy the festivities.*

For many people, the holiday season evokes feelings of warmth, joy, and laughter. They may get to spend time with family members and friends they haven't seen lately or enjoy delicious foods. With so much cheer to be had, it begs the question: Can holidays cure depression?

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), [roughly 21 million adults](#) in the United States experienced at least one major depressive disorder in 2020. As this year reaches its end and the holidays draw closer, many people who have yet to seek professional help for these episodes may be looking for another way to find relief from their symptoms.

Can the holidays provide the support they need? Or is holiday stress actually more likely to worsen someone's depression? Below, we will discuss the different impacts the holiday season can have on someone's mental health, as well as steps they can take to achieve long-term recovery.

## Symptoms of Depression

Before we discuss the question, "Can holidays cure depression?" it may be helpful to understand the difference between sadness and depression. It is normal to feel sadness at certain points in life, especially in response to negative events. However, if feelings of sorrow persist for longer than two weeks or have no discernible cause, it may be due to depression.

In addition, depression encompasses much more than simply "feeling sad." [Other signs](#) of depression can manifest in both psychological and physical ways, and they include symptoms like:

- Persistent feelings of hopelessness or guilt
- Lack of interest in hobbies and activities
- Inconsistent sleep patterns
- [Unexplainable aches and pains](#)
- Irritability or agitation
- Feelings of apathy, numbness, or emptiness
- Weight changes
- Fatigue
- [Brain fog](#)
- Suicidal thoughts

If you or a loved one experience more than one of the above symptoms, you may be living with depression. If that's the case, the approaching holidays may fill you with either hope or dread. With all the festivities occurring, can holidays cure depression? Or will holiday stress make your symptoms worse?

## Can Holidays Cure Depression?

Ideally, the holidays should bring warmth and happiness into someone's life. But just how powerful is the positive impact of a nice holiday season? For instance, can holidays cure depression?

In short, no. Even if the holidays are someone's favorite time of year, they cannot cure depression on their own. Instead, they may offer a temporary reprieve from symptoms of depression. This makes it easier to cope with mental illness, which can make people feel as though they've been cured.

This is especially true for individuals spending time with friends and family members during the holidays. Being able to talk and play games with loved ones can pull someone out of a dark mentality.

The holidays can inspire joy and distract from depression in other ways as well. For example, someone may enjoy gift exchanges, decadent foods, colorful decorations, and more. These events may only occur during the holidays, which gives them the power to provide happiness even in an otherwise challenging time.

### Why Not?

With all that in mind, why is "no" the answer to, "Can holidays cure depression?" The explanation lies in the fact that the holidays will pass. Once the season is over, someone who finds joy from the festivities will likely return to feeling depressed. Life returns to its normal pace, and depression makes itself known once more.

Ultimately, life is full of ups and downs. Depression, too, may come in waves or episodes that vary in intensity. The important thing to remember is that it will probably not go away entirely [unless someone seeks professional treatment](#). The holidays may stave off episodes of depression in the short term, but for the sake of someone's future recovery, they may need additional support.

## Can Holidays Cause Depression?

Not everyone associates the holidays with feelings of joy and togetherness. For some individuals, the holiday season is difficult. They may struggle with the shorter days or face bouts of loneliness if they are unable to meet with any loved ones.

Furthermore, even if someone is able to spend time with family and friends during the holidays, they may not have a positive experience. Someone may feel increased pressure to participate in behaviors like [drinking alcohol](#). They may also have to cope with [dysfunctional family dynamics](#) that make being around one another challenging.

In these situations, instead of asking, “Can holidays cure depression?” someone may want to ask, “Can holidays cause depression?” And, indeed, they may find that their depression actually worsens during the holiday season.

Even people who don’t experience depressive episodes at any other time of year may struggle with the holiday blues. When that is the case, they may live with a condition called seasonal affective disorder.

## Seasonal Depression

[Seasonal affective disorder \(SAD\)](#) is a type of depression that only affects someone during certain months of the year. Typically, people with SAD experience episodes during the fall and winter months specifically, with January and February often being the hardest to get through.

However, when asking questions like, “Can holidays cure depression?” and “Can holidays cause depression?” it is easy to overlook other contributing factors. In truth, the holidays themselves may not be directly responsible for seasonal depression.

Instead, SAD has been connected to biochemical imbalances in the brain. Current research suggests that these imbalances are due to the shorter periods of daylight during the winter. It can disrupt someone’s internal clock and cause them to fall out of rhythm with their daily life.

It is also important to remember that someone will not be “cured” of SAD once winter passes. As the name suggests, it is a seasonal disorder that will likely return the following fall. The best way to prevent this from happening is to seek professional mental health treatment.

## Depression Treatment in Brooksville, Florida

Even though the answer to, “Can holidays cure depression?” is no, that doesn’t mean there aren’t other avenues to get help. For instance, Springbrook Behavioral Hospital is a mental health treatment center that offers [inpatient treatment](#) for depression.

During treatment, patients work with a team of mental health professionals to set realistic goals and develop a recovery plan tailored to their individual needs. This plan may include a variety of evidence-based treatment options, such as:

- [Cognitive behavioral therapy \(CBT\)](#)
- Group therapy
- Therapeutic activity groups
- Family counseling

- Medication management
- Discharge and aftercare planning

Springbrook Behavioral Hospital also offers [crisis stabilization services](#) and [partial hospitalization](#) for individuals who need a different level of support. Whether you experience depression during the holidays or all year long, you can recover through one of our flexible treatment programs.

## Get Help Before the New Year

Can holidays cure depression? No, but with the right support and access to therapeutic resources, you can learn to manage your symptoms and live a joyous life. If you live with major depressive disorder, seasonal affective disorder, or another form of depression, you can reach out to Springbrook Behavioral Hospital for help.

Depression won't disappear because of the holidays. Likewise, holiday blues will likely re-emerge next year even if they lighten up in the new year. For these reasons, you should not wait to seek treatment that could start helping you today.

To learn more about the mental health services at Springbrook Behavioral Hospital, call our admissions experts at [352-600-3288](tel:352-600-3288). You may also fill out a [confidential contact form](#) online. One of our team members will get back to you quickly to answer any questions like, "Can holidays cure depression?" and guide you through the enrollment process.