

THE JANUARY BLAH'S or . . .

WHY AM I SO MISERABLE?

By Nancy H. Chatten

It is January. The bright Christmas ornaments are packed away, and the New Years excitement has waned. The winter season seemingly stretches eternally before us. The weather is stormy, cold and just plain miserable. The days are short, dark, and the sun does not come out for extended periods. We are often housebound with too little to do and only repeats of last seasons shows to watch on television. This is when the January Blahs begin and we become prime candidates for unhealthy eating habits.

When we experience this situation, we are predisposed to be tired, although we seem to be sleeping more. Often our tempers are short and we just can't cope with one more day of the winter blues. When people who have food issues feel like this they often overeat. We feel there might be something about a large slice of chocolate cake with ice cream that will soothe our sore wintry souls. This leads to pounds added to already pound heavy bodies, then guilt and stress are thrown into the mix which results in the January blahs.

How to cope?

There are strategies we can use to overcome these problems.

Here are a few to help you get started.

1. If you can, take a mini vacation overnight to a hotel and pamper yourself with room service. Of course you should order only healthy food and drinks Use the pool, hot tub, Jacuzzi or sauna if these facilities are available. Some hotels even have exercise and weight rooms that guests can use to work out.

Exercise is an important part of curing the January Blahs. Even if you only go to the next city or town to stay, it is a change from home.

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2. Find a hobby that really interests you and do it. Become immersed in it to the extent that you forget that the weather

is cold and the day is long and boring. There has to be something that you would enjoy.

3. Take a winter class at a local college or high school. There are free classes on the Internet too! When the mind is active it is hard to be bored or feel stressed about the weather.

4. If cabin fever from being cooped up in the house too long is a problem, plan a day out shopping. Take a friend or two and go to the local mall. Enjoy their companionship, but if you must go alone at least have a little fun. While your walking in the mall make yourself smile at complete strangers, even nod your head at them or say hello. Sooner or later someone is bound to smile back. It will feel like a weight has been lifted off your shoulders. The smile will become easier and easier to do as you stroll about shopping. (You don't have to spend a lot of money; window shopping doesn't cost a thing.) Have a good, low fat, healthy lunch. When you return home, you will feel more in control and less like the walls are closing in on you.

5. Change your hair style. It is amazing how a new hair style will make your day brighter. Try a different cut or color. Don't be afraid to experiment with something new. Life is more exciting when you take chances and hair will grow out, or back in a few months.