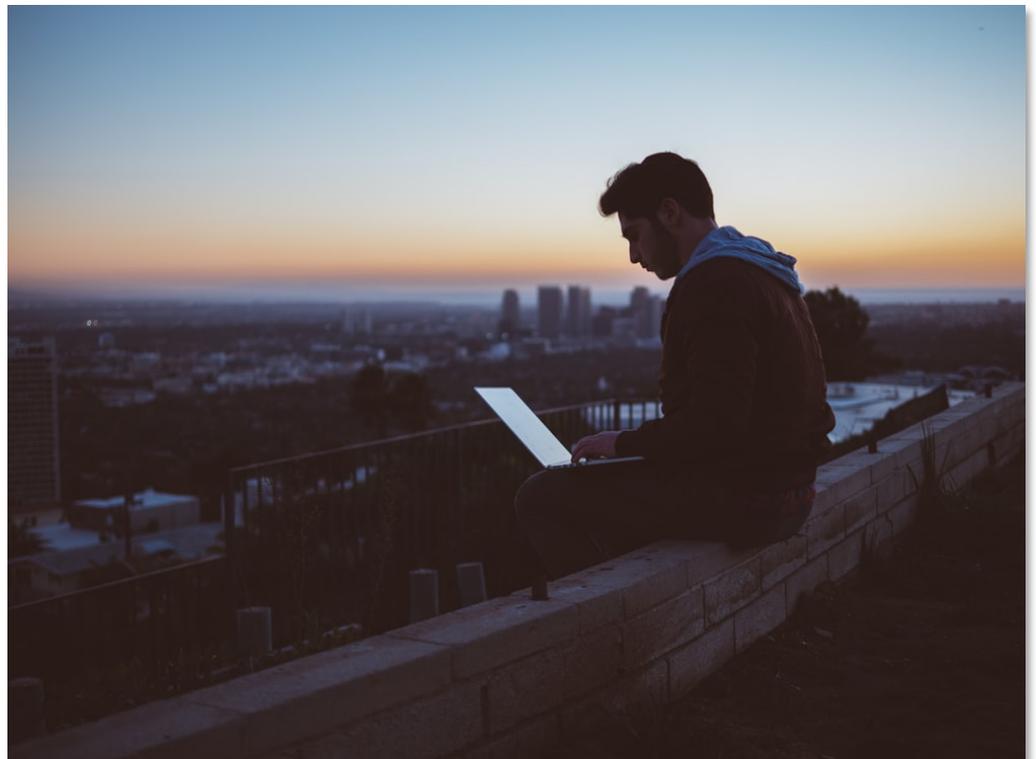

*The back-to-school
edition*

Summer is wending its way into Autumn. The kids are heading back to schools. People are heading back to work, offices, factories and warehouses. Subject to all of the covid background, things are returning to some version of normality.

It's time to think towards the future; employers are looking at new working practices and are looking to provide value for themselves and their employees in every way.



Patient Advocate are helping employers from all walks of business embrace this change to life as we know it.

As we return to school runs, commutes, working in person rather than virtually, some of us will worry about potential risks, illness and infections. That worry is difficult to measure, as all of us see the world in 2021 in different lights.

That's why the Patient Advocate team of nurses provide the help, guidance, advice and simple human connection across all aspects of health concerns. From simple questions to in-depth guidance, employees can access a fully trained, dedicated and caring health professionals to help them navigate through issues, problems and education, holding their hand until they feel back in control.



This human connection is key, even more so in today's technology times; Patient Advocate use technology to enable and assist, not replace and hinder people dealing with people.

“What is it that makes us human? It’s not something you can program. You can’t put it into a chip. It’s the strength of the human heart. The difference between us and machines.”

From the movie, Terminator Salvation.

Don’t let the sun go down on me...

Don’t be sad

Partner content

As Autumn approaches, so does the annual winding back of the clocks – one of our partners helps explain the real effects.

“Will you be S.A.D to see the sun go?” and do the winter months influence your mental and emotional health?



Hopefully, we can help explain as to why you might be feeling less chirpy during the autumn and winter months, and why exactly the sun helps to turn your frown upside down. We will briefly look at the importance of vitamin D and your immune system, and why it has such a pivotal role to play for your overall health and wellbeing.

The Sunshine hormone

Vitamin D, or the sunshine vitamin, which is a hormone, has many positive health benefits, as it is a key regulator and controls around 900 genes, or 1/24 of your entire genome. Vitamin D also turns on the expression of TPH2 (Tryptophan hydroxylase 2) which is a gene in the brain associated with mental health that converts tryptophan, found in various foods, into serotonin, the “happy hormone”.



Serotonin has a wide variety of functions, from regulating your mood, happiness, and anxiety, as well as learning skills and memory. It's also extremely important in appetite control, as well as regulating the body's sleep cycle and internal clock.

This will be one of the main reasons as to why depression and anxiety levels skyrocket during the winter months. Now, before you can turn tryptophan into serotonin, you will need your vitamin D to have been converted effectively, as vitamin D doesn't exert its effects from being present within the blood.

Blood Tests Don't Tell The Whole Story

A blood test only tells half the story, as just because a nutrient is present within the blood, does not mean you are genetically converting it at the cellular level. We all have specific genes that

are responsible for various physiological functions, such as the journey that vitamin D takes before you can use it.

Once you know your specific conversion rate of vitamin D, there are various lifestyle recommendations to improve your genetic expression, as simply taking more vitamin D, in many instances, will not work. This may help to alleviate S.A.D and improve your general mood and wellbeing during the autumn and winter months.

Some of the other factors which will contribute towards having a possible vitamin D deficiency will be lifestyle and environmental, such as reduced outdoor activities, old age, race, sunscreen, living in northern hemisphere, air pollution, poor dietary choices and obesity, where levels will also be lower, as vitamin D is fat soluble and will actually find it harder to be released into the blood stream when an individual has higher levels of bodyfat.



Obese and overweight individuals will have around 50% less vitamin D compared to those with normal bodyfat levels. And, interestingly, reports also indicate that as we age, our ability to absorb and process might be affected, with a 70-year-old producing roughly 4 times less vitamin D than they would have in their 20's.

We also need to be aware that those individuals with darker skin will have an issue converting the sun's UVB rays, as melanin,

which gives the darker pigmentation and colour to the skin as “mother natures” sunblock. So, those living in the northern hemisphere would be wise to get their levels checked, especially during the autumn and winter months.



And given the current health climate, you might also find it useful to know that vitamin D helps with the enhancement and regulation of the innate immune response. It has also been shown in various studies to have protective effect against respiratory tract infections, and that daily or weekly supplementation reduced the risk of acute respiratory infection by more than 50%.

Many thanks to our partner for this article.

In the next edition

Next month... With October, it's the start of the Christmas countdown, so expect Santa, reindeer, elves... kidding.

We will be leaving the topics up for grabs next month, so if there is something you would like to see, issues you'd like us to cover, just let us know and we will do our best.

If you have any comments, or would like to submit a piece for our newsletter, please just let us know at info@patientadvocate.co.uk

Same applies if you'd like to talk to us about working in partnership - we are always happy to work with people and businesses that have the same ethos and goals as us...

Until next time,

