Shedding light on ways to combat the blues

By LESLIE TAMURA
The Washington Post

With several months ahead of short days and long nights, what can you do about the winter blues?

Experts say the best place to start is by exercising and limiting your carbohydrate and sugar intake. Although people may crave serotonin-boosting carbohydrates, binging on high-caloric foods will lead to the winter weight gain common to those who suffer from seasonal affective disorder that often takes a toll on self-esteem.

Brighten your environment: Add extra lights to rooms, and open your blinds. Take a lunchtime walk in the sun. If you have the resources, vacation in a tropical location.

Increased light exposure may trick your body clock that it is a long, bright, summer day. If you start getting more light on early autumn mornings, your internal clock may never get out of sync. “I try to simulate ‘summer’ in the winter,” Rosenthal says. “I try to move seamlessly from one illuminated place to another.”

Around September, Rosenthal uses a “dawn simulator” alarm clock that starts to light up his bedroom around 5 a.m. A bright-light therapy lamp turns on a couple of hours before the alarm to start the day.

“Light therapy is of choice,” Lewy says, noninvasive approach to relieving winter symptoms. A light therapy box can mimics a typical fluorescent light for a typical fluorescent light to 10,000 lux (the last equivalent to a bright sun) for $75 to $475. The sooner you start, the better.

16 tips for entertaining during holiday

By JURA KONCIUS
The Washington Post

Last Thanksgiving, I was planning to serve turkey to eight people at my fully extended dining room table. At the crystal and silver on the table. There was lots of elbow room as we toasted our blessings. No one knew our little secret: Under the hand-painted Limoges plates and antique silverware was a second table set up on a nearby shelf. Everyone could use some fresh ideas on how to get organized, invent centerpieces, compose eye-catching table settings and be a good guest. We called designers, retailers and Md. Those might include potatoes, polishing cans, setting up a wine bar. You can choose what they're worth.