

# What Are the Benefits of Sunlight?

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## Sunlight and serotonin

We're used to hearing about how too much of the sun's warm rays can be harmful to your skin. But did you know the right balance can have lots of mood-lifting benefits?

Sunlight and darkness trigger the release of hormones in your brain. Exposure to sunlight is thought to increase the brain's release of a hormone called [serotonin](#). Serotonin is associated with boosting mood and helping a person feel calm and focused. At night, darker lighting triggers the brain to make another hormone called [melatonin](#). This hormone is responsible for helping you sleep.

Without enough sun exposure, your serotonin levels can dip. Low levels of serotonin are associated with a higher risk of [major depression with seasonal pattern](#) (formerly known as seasonal affective disorder or SAD). This is a form of depression triggered by the changing seasons.

A mood boost isn't the only reason to get increased amounts of sunlight. There are several health benefits associated with catching moderate amounts of rays.