

Evening Light and Depression

Dim light in the evening was recently found to increase depression. Computers and iPads produce the most harmful light; then TV; then lamps, nightlights, and urban light-pollution. Artificial evening light has also been linked to sleep disorders, obesity, breast and prostate cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

On the other hand, we know that bright light in the morning can reduce depression. It seems we were meant to live more in-sync with the sun. If you can't turn off the lights at night, try one of these creative solutions: 1) Special glasses can be worn at night to filter out the harmful rays (at www.lowbluelights.com or www.cet.org – under “Protective Eyewear”); 2) A free download will synchronize your computer's light settings with the sun (google f.lux).

Scientific Reference: Bedrosian TA et al, Molecular Psychiatry, July 2012

—Chris Aiken, MD, updated 3/18/2013