



## **SADA'S GUIDELINES FOR BUYING A LIGHTBOX**

**SAD lightboxes can be purchased from a number of different manufacturers. Our guide will help you know what to look for when buying one in an increasingly competitive market.**

**First, a few FAQs:**

### ***Can SADA recommend a particular model?***

The question everyone asks SADA is "which box shall I buy?" We all have our favourites but we cannot decide for you or promote particular models. Much depends on your lifestyle and the severity of your symptoms. However, we hope that our guidelines will put you on the right track.

### ***The market is full of different brands and models. How do I make a decision?***

We currently recommend UK companies who have considerable experience in producing and refining lightboxes that comply with medical and safety standards. We know that they are tried and tested and will be able to help you with your individual requirements. However, the internet has expanded the market greatly in recent years and reputable foreign firms such as Beurer are also exporting lightboxes to medically approved standards. Look for the verification CE when you consider buying a product and go for something on a trial basis if you can.

The demand for dedicated SAD lightboxes is limited but there is more awareness generally about the need for light at home and in the workplace. Consequently, many small devices are now being marketed as "energy" and "lifestyle" lights. These are usually blue light or LEDs and are highly portable to suit people who want a quick pick-me-up. Although useful as add-ons, they may not be suitable for more serious cases of SAD and regular daily use. Costs vary and if you have a diagnosis of SAD, you might be better advised to invest in a good standard lightbox for use first thing in the morning. Once you have established how much light you need and when, you can add other devices to get you through the day and for short periods at work.

Daylight simulation lamps are an excellent add-on product once you have a lightbox or if your problem is not being able to wake in the mornings. They will wake you gently and naturally and some can also be used to lower light at night to encourage sleep. However, they are not a substitute SAD treatment if your condition is more serious. Light visors are fine for short periods of travel but tend to be impractical for everyday use.

We suggest that you avoid the Valkee (a highly promoted device that delivers light through the ear). It is not cheap, based on very doubtful science and we consider it to have been insufficiently trialled.

### ***Should I use a box with natural daylight or bright white light tubes?***

Both types of light are considered to be equally effective and safe for long-term use and the choice is a matter of personal preference. Many of us have been using this type of lightbox for decades without ill effects or eye damage. Some manufacturers may offer a choice of both types of light in their boxes. The daylight tubes mimic the spectrum of natural daylight without the UV (ultra-violet).

### ***What about blue light and LEDs?***

Many manufacturers now market products which incorporate blue light and/or light-emitting diodes (LEDs) instead of full-spectrum natural daylight or white light tubes. There is some evidence that the ganglion cells in the eye are more sensitive to blue light than other wavelengths and that blue light is particularly energising. It is used successfully for acne and skin treatments but usually for much shorter periods of time. Both blue light and LEDs have proved effective in SAD treatment, so the choice is yours. We remain cautious simply because no research is yet available into the long-term use of either and blue light may be more associated with retinal damage.

## **Lightbox Checklist**

- 1. It should be certified as a medical device for use in SAD***
- 2. The manufacturer should supply details of the lux level (e.g. 10,000). This is a measurement for the intensity of light your eyes receive at a given distance. The distance at which the stated lux level applies should be clearly specified (i.e. how near you must be to get the required amount).***
- 3. Lux distance measurements should be independently verified***
- 4. Always check the manufacturer's recommendations for usage time and distance***
- 5. Make sure it is screened to filter out harmful UV light***
- 6. The lightbox should either have passed clinical trials or its efficacy should be based on the predicate device (a similar device that has already been found to be equivalent) used in the clinical trial***
- 7. If you are unsure, choose a box that is available on home trial - SADA does recommend trying before buying***
- 8. SADA does not recommend pure blue light as there is, as yet, insufficient evidence against long-term damage to the eye.***
- 9. No VAT is payable if you are using the box for medical reasons***
- 10. The box should currently conform to European Standards (shown by a CE mark indicating a medical device)***

## UK Recommended Lightbox Companies

**SAD Lightbox  
Company**

**Unit 2, Aston Hill, Lewknor, Oxfordshire OX49 5SG**  
**Tel: 0845 095 6477**  
<http://www.sad.uk.com>

**Lumie**

**3 The Links, Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB23 8UD**  
**Tel: 01954 780500**  
<http://www.lumie.com>

3 year guarantee  
Trial scheme

**The SAD Light  
Hire Company**

**16 Stanley Street, Southport, Merseyside PR9 0BY**  
**Order hotline: 0800 107 7951**  
**Info hotline: 01704 500505**  
<http://www.sad-lighthire.co.uk>

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