

Bipolar Disorder

What is bipolar disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a condition in which a person has extreme changes of mood. The changes in mood may range from periods of time where they are of being unusually happy (known as 'mania' or 'hypomania') to periods of being unusually sad ('depression'). The mood-swings are beyond what would be considered normal for a person, and are not a normal associated with their personality.

Bipolar disorder, is sometimes called:

- Manic depressive disorder
- Bipolar affective disorder
- Bipolar mood disorder

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms during a 'high' or manic episode:

- Feeling incredibly happy or 'high' in mood, or very excited
- Feeling irritable
- Talking too much
- Racing thoughts
- Increased activity and restlessness
- Difficulty in concentrating, constant changes in plans
- Over confidence and inflated ideas about yourself or your abilities
- Decreased need for sleep
- Not looking after oneself
- Increased sociability or being excessively friendly
- Increased sexual energy
- Overspending of money or other types of reckless or extreme behavior

'**Hypomania**' is a milder form of mania (less severe and for shorter periods). During these periods of time, people can actually become very productive and creative. If left untreated, hypomania, can become more severe, and may be followed by an episode of depression.

Symptoms during a depressive episode:

- Feeling very sad most of the time
- Decreased energy and activity
- Not being able to enjoy things he/she normally like doing
- Lack of appetite
- Disturbed sleep
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

[More information on the back](#)

What are the symptoms of a mixed episode?

During a mixed episode manic symptoms and depressive symptoms occur at the same time.

What causes bipolar disorder?

The cause of bipolar disorder is unknown.

How is it treated?

A treatment plan usually includes a combination of medicine and psychotherapy (also called “talk therapy”). Your child’s doctor will develop a custom treatment plan to help manage the condition. Bipolar disorder is a lifelong illness and will require long-term treatment.

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