

Living with Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is a mental illness that has quick changes in moods of mania (feeling very excited) or depression. It affects how you think, your energy levels, and behavior. Bipolar is not a sign of weakness, but something you can learn to manage.

Signs of Mania

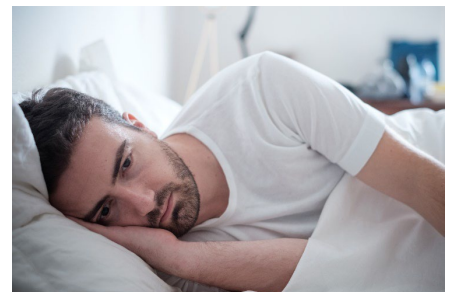
People with bipolar disorder have mania or hypomania (a less severe form of mania). Mania can last a week or longer and has the following symptoms:

- Intense mood
- Feeling much more cheerful and self-confident
- Easily irritated or aggressive
- Less need for sleep and not feeling tired
- A sense of feeling important or that you have special powers
- Having a lot of ideas at one time
- Speaking very fast or switching between thoughts
- Making bad decisions or getting easily distracted
- Not being responsible
- Having a belief that something is true when it is not
- Hearing, seeing, tasting, or feeling things that seem real but are not

Signs of Depression

People who are bipolar may have depression. Some symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad for a long time or crying for no reason
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Feeling easily bothered, angered, or worried
- Having anxiety or feeling like you do not have hope
- Not able to focus or make decisions
- Feeling guilty or like you are not important
- No longer happy when doing things you enjoy
- Not wanting to be around others and wanting to be alone
- Having low energy for a long time
- Having pain that you cannot explain
- Thinking about death or suicide



These things may increase your risk for having bipolar disorder:

- Having a family member with this illness or other mental health condition
- Your genetics
- Going through stressful things as a child or as an adult
- Use of drugs or alcohol in large amounts

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Treatment and Managing Symptoms

You can live a full life with bipolar disorder. With the help of healthcare team, medicine, therapy, and the support of loved ones, you can manage bipolar.

Medication:

- Different kinds of medicine given by your doctor can help with symptoms and help manage your health.
- Take medicine as recommended, and tell your healthcare team about any side effects or problems

Therapy:

- Different kinds of therapy can help you learn about the illness, find ways to cope, and improve your relationships.



Lifestyle:

- Keep a daily routine, getting exercise, and having the same sleep and wake times every day can help with symptoms.
- Manage stress with activities that help you relax.
- Do not use drugs and alcohol. These worsen symptoms and can stop medications from working.

Reach out to your healthcare team, therapist, or other supports when in need of help. Having supportive people around you can help with your overall health and to control symptoms. You do not have to face this alone.

When meeting with your healthcare team, share how you are doing and what you are feeling. They are there to help you in treating your symptoms.

Many people living with bipolar disorder have success keeping up with their health and are successful in many areas of their lives.