

# BIPOLAR DISORDER (MANIC DEPRESSIVE)

Bipolar disorder is a mental illness characterized by alternating periods of depression and mania including extreme mood swings and behaviour changes, which significantly impair normal every day functioning. The most common type of bipolar disorder is when an individual cycles back and forth between a state of mania and depression.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF BIPOLAR DISORDER?

### Manic symptoms include:

1. Euphoric mood
2. Increased energy
3. Impulsive spending
4. Aggressive behaviour
5. Racing ideas and speech
6. Weight loss
7. Decreased need for sleep
8. Unconsidered risk taking
9. Mood changes – hyper silliness to extremely irritated

### Depressed symptoms include:

1. Persistent sad mood
2. Recurrent thoughts about death
3. Loss of energy
4. Difficulty concentrating
5. Change in appetite
6. Change in sleeping patterns
7. Loss of interest in usual activities
8. Low self-esteem
9. Feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness

People with bipolar disorder may have difficulty with relationships and may also have alcohol and drug addictions.

## HOW IS BIPOLAR DISORDER TREATED?

Telling a person to snap out of it and get back to their usual self will not work, so don't even go there. Bipolar disorder is a medical condition that requires medication. Recommended medication includes mood stabilizers and antidepressants. Sometimes other medications are used also.

**Mood stabilizers** – Improve and reduce symptoms of depression.

**Antidepressants** – Generally the use of antidepressants is limited to treatment during depressive episodes to help lessen the symptoms.

Counselling is also helpful along, with support from family and friends.

## LONG TERM OUTLOOK

Bipolar disorder is a long-term condition. With treatment, many people are able to lead positive and productive lives.

 ***Check this out:***

<http://www.cmha.ca>