

BIPOLAR DISORDER



BIPOLAR DISORDER is a lifelong illness. It affects millions of people each year. With proper treatment, people with bipolar disorder can live normal lives. Work with your doctor to find treatment that is best for you.

For helpful tools, patient interviews,
treatment information, and more, visit:

www.1on1health.com





Learn About Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is a lifelong illness. It involves strong mood swings. “Bipolar” refers to the two extremes (poles) of the illness. These are highs and lows. The highs are called mania. The lows are depression. You may hear the illness called manic-depression.

Severe highs and lows

Highs and lows can be part of life. But, with bipolar disorder, they can be severe. You may feel too depressed to get out of bed one day. Soon after, you may feel full of energy. You may have normal times between the highs and lows. When people have mood symptoms, it’s more likely to be depression.

Mood swings can be hard to predict. But you may have warning signs. You may even learn what can trigger your symptoms. You’ll read about this and more in this booklet.

Bipolar disorder is complex. Doctors don’t know what causes it. They know that genes play a role. The illness may be linked to brain chemicals. These chemicals can get out of balance.

There are treatments to help control the symptoms. Learn about your condition. Get help for it. This booklet is a good first step.

LOOK, LISTEN & LEARN™



Visit www.1on1health.com and see how bipolar disorder may affect the brain.

Know Your Triggers

Health and lifestyle changes may trigger your symptoms. Some common changes are:

- Not having a sleep schedule
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Stopping your medicine, or starting medicine for depression or another illness
- Having thyroid or other health problems

Events can also trigger symptoms. Some common ones are:

- Seasonal changes
- Holidays
- Problems with family or friends, or at work
- The death of a loved one

Try to spot your triggers. A Mood Chart may help. Use it to track your feelings. With time, you may see patterns.

Talk about your triggers with your family and friends. They can help you avoid your triggers.

LOOK, LISTEN & LEARN™



Visit www.1on1health.com for a Mood Chart you can print and use. It may help you and your doctor see your triggers.



Know The Symptoms

Bipolar disorder symptoms can vary from one person to the next. Talk with your doctor about your symptoms at each visit. Bipolar disorder causes symptoms like:

Depression. You may:

- Feel sad or blue.
- Have less interest in things you used to enjoy.
- Feel worthless, hopeless, or guilty.
- Sleep too little or too much.
- Lose or gain weight, or have a change in your hunger.
- Feel tired or restless.
- Have trouble thinking or making decisions.
- Think of death or suicide.

Mania. You may:

- Have more energy and need less sleep.
- Have racing thoughts or your mind jumps around.
- Talk more than usual.
- Feel more sure of yourself than usual.
- Not finish things that you've started.
- Take extreme risks.
- See or hear things that are not there.

Hypomania is mild mania. You may feel good. But this feeling may change to full-blown mania or depression.

Mixed mood is feelings of mania and depression that go back and forth in the same day.

Hard to diagnose

Bipolar disorder can be hard to detect. Some people may go years without being diagnosed. There are different reasons for this:

- Mania can feel good. So, you may not ask for help when you are manic.
- You may see the doctor only when you're depressed. He or she may think that you have depression, not bipolar disorder. That can be a problem. **Depression medicine can make bipolar disorder worse.**
- Bipolar disorder can seem like other conditions.

If you think you may have bipolar disorder, fill out the checklist on the next two pages. Share it with your doctor. He or she can use it to help diagnose you.

1ON1 WITH PATIENTS



Visit www.1on1health.com to hear how dealing with bipolar disorder led Greg to a new career.



Fill Out The Bipolar Disorder Checklist

This checklist can help your doctor screen you for bipolar disorder. Take your time. Answer all the questions as best as you can.

1. Has there been a time when you were not your usual self, and you felt so good or so hyper that others thought you were not your normal self? Or, you were so hyper that you got into trouble?

Yes No

You were so easily angered that you shouted at people or started fights?

Yes No

You felt much more sure of yourself than usual?

Yes No

You got much less sleep than usual and didn't miss it?

Yes No

You talked much more or spoke much faster than usual?

Yes No

Thoughts raced through your head or you couldn't slow down your mind?

Yes No

You were so easily distracted that you couldn't focus?

Yes No

You had much more energy than usual?

Yes No

You were much more active or did many more things than usual?

Yes No

You were much more social than usual? For example, you phoned friends in the middle of the night?

Yes No

You were much more interested in sex than usual?

Yes No

You did things that were unusual for you, or that other people thought were extreme, foolish, or risky?

Yes No

You spent money that got you or your family into trouble?

Yes No

2. If you checked YES to more than one of the questions above, have several of these things happened during the same period of time?

Yes No

3. How much of a problem did any of these things cause you (like not being able to work, or having money or legal troubles)? Choose one.

No problem Moderate problem

Minor problem Serious problem

-Adapted with permission from Robert M.A. Hirschfeld, M.D.



Get more at www.1on1health.com



Learn About Treatment

Medicines are used to manage bipolar disorder. Your doctor may prescribe more than one.

Medicines for bipolar disorder

Your doctor may prescribe:

- **Medicine to help keep your mood stable.** These medicines may delay or decrease mood highs and lows. Some help treat the mood episode short term. Others can help delay mood swings for a longer period. You may need blood tests with some of them. Ask your doctor.
- **Medicine for depression.** These medicines don't treat the whole illness. Your doctor may prescribe one of these medicines when you're depressed, as well as a drug to keep your mood stable.

Your doctor may also prescribe other medicines or treatments depending on your symptoms.

Different treatments can have different side effects. Talk with your doctor about the best treatment options for you. Never stop taking your medicine without speaking with your doctor first.

Stay On Treatment

Taking medicine for bipolar disorder doesn't mean that all of your problems will be solved. But the right treatment can **help control your mood swings**. Longer times between your mood swings can help make your life more normal.

Like people with other medical conditions that need treatment, people with bipolar disorder should take medicine long term. This can help keep the illness from getting worse.

Treatment tips:

- Take your medicine every day as your doctor prescribed. **Take it even if you feel fine.**
- Tell your doctor how the medicine makes you feel.
- Find a way to remember your medicine. Write down your medicines and when to take them. Use a pillbox to organize your medicines. Put up a calendar to help you remember what to take and when to take it.
- Don't run out of your medicine. Get your refills on time.

Give treatment time. It may take weeks or more to see results.

Remember: Don't stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.



Think About Talk Therapy

Talk therapy is also called psychotherapy. This type of counseling involves talking with a mental health expert, like a doctor, about your situation, relationships, and condition. It can help you make sense of your thoughts and feelings.

Talk therapy is not about getting all the answers or advice. It is a way to learn more about yourself. You can get information, support, and honest feedback in a safe, private setting.

There are different types of talk therapy. Some are one-on-one and some are in a group setting. Some types provide education and support. Others focus on learning about yourself or your relationships.

Talk therapy can be an important part of treatment. It may help you gain confidence. And, therapy can help reduce the strain of bipolar disorder on your relationships.

1ON1 WITH PATIENTS



Leslie wonders if her life might have been different with early treatment. Visit www.1on1health.com to hear about her experience.

Prepare For Highs & Lows

You may have mood swings even with treatment. Most people have warning signs. Look for changes in your:

- Sleep
- Sex drive
- Energy
- Ability to focus
- Self-esteem

Be aware of your moods. If you feel a change, **get help**. Don't wait. And remember, medicine can help delay or prevent mood swings. Take your medicine just as your doctor told you to.

Your support team

The illness can make it hard to see things clearly. Try to have people you trust help you. They may spot mood changes that you miss.

It also helps to:

- See your doctor and/or counselor as scheduled. They can assess how you're doing.
- Make sure that people close to you know the signs of mania and depression.
- Join a support group. It may help you feel better. Learn more about support groups on page 13.
- Make a list of people you can call if you need help.



Understand Suicide Risks

If you're thinking about suicide:

- **Call 911** to get help before you act on those thoughts.
- Talk with your doctor or counselor.
- Don't stay alone. Join a friend or family member who can watch out for you and tell them not to leave you alone.
- Call the National Hopeline Network at **1 (800) SUICIDE, 1 (800) 784-2433**, or check your phone book for a local crisis hotline if you need someone to talk to.

Suicide is a serious risk for people with bipolar disorder. Thinking about suicide **means you need to get help to control your bipolar disorder symptoms**. There are things you can do to help prevent suicide. The right treatment can help people with bipolar disorder feel better.

Other things you may find helpful:

- **Get treatment and stay with it.**
- **Find someone you can talk with openly when you are depressed.**
- **Don't use street drugs and alcohol.**
- **Connect with people.**
- **Do things you enjoy.**
- **Do something physical.**
- **Keep a journal.**

Get Support

Bipolar disorder can make you feel alone. But millions of people have it. Meeting some of them may help you. Think about joining a support group.

How support groups can help

Support group members may know how you feel. They've faced some of the same issues. Hearing from people who have "been there" may help.

You might like talking to people who know about the illness first-hand. And, a support group may help you feel better about yourself. You may see that there's nothing to be ashamed of. People with the illness can lead normal lives.

How do I find a group?

Ask your doctor or counselor. Also, check with groups like:

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

730 North Franklin Street, Suite 501
Chicago, IL 60610-7224
Phone: (800) 826-3632 or (312) 642-0049
www.dbsalliance.org/

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)

Colonial Place Three
2107 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-3042
Phone: (800) 950-NAMI (6264) or (703) 524-7600
www.nami.org/



Work With Your Doctor

This form can help you work with your doctor. Tell him or her how you're feeling. Have questions ready for your visit.

Take this form with you when you visit your doctor. Write the answers in the spaces below.

1. What are my treatment options?

2. When should I take my medicine? How?

3. What should I do if I have side effects?

4. Are there other medicines or foods I shouldn't take with my medicine?

5. When should my medicine start working?

6. What should I do if my medicine doesn't seem to work?

7. Should I get counseling?

8. When should I see you again?





Take An Active Role

Take an active role in managing bipolar disorder. Besides following your Treatment Plan, here are some things that may help:

- Stay on treatment as prescribed by your doctor.
- Use a Mood Chart to track your moods and symptoms.
- Learn about and try to avoid your triggers.
- Think about joining a support group.

This booklet was designed to help you learn about all of these things and more. Talk with your doctor and counselor if you have any questions about your illness and treatment.

1ON1 WITH PATIENTS



Thanks to treatment, Stuart feels he leads a normal life. Hear him explain why at www.1on1health.com.

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