

FACTS ABOUT BIPOLAR DISORDER

WHAT IS BIPOLAR DISORDER?

A mood disorder previously known as manic depression characterised by extreme fluctuations of mood from highly elevated (mania) to a very low depressed mood.

About 1 in 50 Australians develop bipolar and it is more common in young adults, although it can affect anybody.

People with bipolar are about 15 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population.

There are 3 types of bipolar.

BIPOLAR I DISORDER

Alternating major depressive episodes with full manic episodes.

BIPOLAR II DISORDER

Major depressive episodes alternating with hypomanic episodes, which are less severe than full manic episodes. It is thought that only 10-13% of cases progress to bipolar I disorder.

CYCLOTHYMIC DISORDER

The manic or major depressive episodes are less severe but last longer. It tends to be chronic and lifelong with sufferers having an increased risk of developing bipolar I or II disorders.

SYMPTOMS

MANIC EPISODE

- Over confident
- Excited
- Euphoric
- Invincible
- Energetic
- Hallucinations or delusions
- Racing thoughts
- Sleeplessness without getting tired
- Increased libido
- Very active
- Intolerant
- Easily distracted
- Impulsive behaviour and recklessness

DEPRESSIVE EPISODE

- Sadness
- Feeling worthless and hopeless
- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Negative and suicidal thoughts
- Slowing down of activity
- Loss of interest in activities or friends
- Changes in appetite
- Fatigue and lethargy
- Sleep disturbances

CAUSES

Many factors contribute to its development but it is unknown what specifically causes it. Evidence suggests it is a combination of biological, psychological and social factors including genetics, stressful life events and negative thinking. Family tension has been associated with a relapse.

TREATMENT

As it is usually a lifelong and recurrent illness long-term treatment is necessary to manage the symptoms.

- Psychological intervention
- Psychiatric treatment
- Electroconvulsive therapy
- Medication
- Support groups

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

It is important to manage the episodes by knowing mood patterns and recognising early warning signs. Healthy lifestyle choice such as diet and exercise can also help.

HOW CAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS HELP?

Be understanding and empathetic, including providing emotional support and reassurance. It is important to be non-judgemental and encourage them to talk about their mood patterns.

REFERRAL/SUPPORT INFO

Drug ARM 1300 656 800
info@drugarm.com.au
drugarm.com.au

Drug ARM Central Intake
07 3620 8880

Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
24/7 crisis support

Or contact your local GP (General Practitioner)

REFERENCES

1 State Government of Victoria (2017). Bipolar Disorder. Retrieved from <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/bipolar-disorder>



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