Bipolar Disorder

URL of this page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/bipolardisorder.html

Also called: Manic-depressive illness

Bipolar disorder is a serious mental illness. People who have it go through unusual mood changes. They go from very happy, "up," and active to very sad and hopeless, "down," and inactive, and then back again. They often have normal moods in between. The up feeling is called mania. The down feeling is depression.

The causes of bipolar disorder aren't always clear. It runs in families. Abnormal brain structure and function may also play a role.

Bipolar disorder often starts in a person's late teen or early adult years. But children and adults can have bipolar disorder too. The illness usually lasts a lifetime.

If you think you may have it, tell your health care provider. A medical checkup can rule out other illnesses that might cause your mood changes.

If not treated, bipolar disorder can lead to damaged relationships, poor job or school performance, and even suicide. However, there are effective treatments to control symptoms: medicine and talk therapy. A combination usually works best.

NIH: National Institute of Mental Health

Start Here

  Also available in Spanish [http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocs/home/common/mentalhealth/depression/625.printerview.html]
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/espanol/trastorno-bipolar-facil-de-leer/index.shtml]

Overviews

- Bipolar Disorder [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/bipolar-disorder/DS00356/DSECTION=all&METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Latest News

- Study Sees Link Between Mom's Flu, Bipolar Risk for Children
Bipolar Disorder Drugs May 'Tweak' Genes Affecting Brain

Diagnosis/Symptoms
- Signs and Symptoms of Mood Disorders [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=education_signs_symptoms] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)
- Also available in Spanish [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=esp_Signs_symptoms]

Treatment
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.consumerreports.org/health/resources/pdf/best-buy-drugs/Anticonvulsants-2pager-Spanish-FINAL.pdf]
- Bipolar Treatment: Are Bipolar I and Bipolar II Treated Differently? [http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/bipolar-treatment/AN02049/METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Coping
- Personal Calendar: Treatment and Physical Tracking [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=wellness_personal_calendar] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)

Disease Management
- Personal Wellness Tools [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=wellness_personal_wellness_tools] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance) - PDF

Specific Conditions
- Rapid Cycling and Its Treatment [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=education_brochures_bipolar_disorder_rapid_cycling] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)
- Types of Bipolar Disorder [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=education_bipolar_types] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)

Related Issues
- Bipolar Disorder and Alcoholism: Are They Related? [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/bipolar-disorder/AN00920/METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Suicide Prevention [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=urgent_crisis_suicide_prevention] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)

Health Check Tools
- Mental Health Screening Center [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=education_screeningcenter] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)
Videos

Clinical Trials
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Bipolar Disorder [http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open(condition=%22Bipolar+Disorder%22) NIH (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Mood Disorders [http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open(condition=%22Mood+Disorders%22) NIH (National Institutes of Health)
- Clinical Trials [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=wellness_clinical_trials] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)

Research

Journal Articles
References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

Directories
- DBSA Chapters / Support Groups [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=peer_support_group_locator] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)
- Find a Mental Health Professional [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=wellness_findapro] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)
- Find Your Local NAMI [http://www.nami.org/PrinterTemplate.cfm?Section=Your_Local_NAMI&Template=CustomSource/AffiliateFinder.cfm] (NAMI)
- Mental Health Treatment Program Locator [http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jsp] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
- Psychologist Locator [http://locator.apa.org/] (American Psychological Association)

Organizations
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance [http://www.dbsalliance.org/]
- NAMI [http://www.nami.org/] Also available in Spanish [http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=NAMI_en_espa%F1ol]
Law and Policy

Children
  Also available in Spanish [http://kidshealth.org/teen/en_espanol/mente/bipolar_esp.html]
- Educating the Child with Bipolar Disorder [http://www.thebalancedmind.org/sites/default/files/edbrochure.pdf] (Balanced Mind Foundation) - PDF
- Storm in My Brain: Kids and Mood Disorders (Bipolar Disorder and Depression) [http://www.dbsalliance.org/pdfs/storm.pdf] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance) - PDF

Teenagers
- Is It Just a Mood or Something Else? [http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pageName=education_brochures_just_a_mood] (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)

Women
- Managing Pregnancy and Bipolar Disorder [http://www.nami.org/PrinterTemplate.cfm?Template=/ContentManagement/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=84897] (NAMI)

Patient Handouts
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000926.htm]

You may also be interested in these related encyclopedia pages:

You may also be interested in these related MedlinePlus topics:
- Depression [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/depression.html]

The primary NIH organization for research on Bipolar Disorder is the National Institute of Mental Health [http://www.nimh.nih.gov]


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