

# Mental Health - Bipolar Disorder

Mental health has to do with your emotions, thoughts and social well-being. It can affect how we:

- Think, feel and act
- Handle stress
- Relate to others
- Make choices

Mental health is important at every age.

Mental health conditions are diagnosed and treated by a physician, such as your doctor or a psychiatrist, or another mental health professional such as a psychologist, psychiatric nurse practitioner, social worker, or counselor.

Treatments for mental health include different types of therapy and sometimes medication. Sometimes you may have more than one behavioral health provider – one to help you manage your medication needs like your primary care doctor, a psychiatrist, or a psychiatric nurse practitioner and one who provides additional therapy or counseling.

Before you are prescribed a medication to treat your mental health condition a doctor will need to do a physical exam. Some mental health conditions happen along with other conditions. The doctor will talk with you about the best way to treat all your conditions.

If you are diagnosed with a mental health condition, go to all your doctor and other provider visits and follow directions given by providers for your care. This is very important! Your providers should be talking to one another to make sure that you are getting all your treatment needs met. Going to all visits helps everyone be up to date on your progress and needs.

Bipolar disorder is a common mental health condition. It involves changes in mood, energy, activity levels, sleep, attention, and actions. A person can be diagnosed during childhood, their teens, or later in life. It is more common to be diagnosed as a young adult or later.

**There are different types of bipolar disorder. The type depends on how extreme your mood changes are, the kind of moods, how often they occur and how long they last. Here are the types:**

Bipolar 1 Disorder - Drastic mood changes and “high” moods that last 7 days and often depressive symptoms or “lows.” This may include:

- Very high energy
- Being very irritable or very easily upset
- Racing thoughts or lots of new ideas
- Very little sleep
- Taking on lots of projects all at once
- Doing things that are very risky or dangerous
- Feeling extra special, important, talented, or powerful

Bipolar 2 Disorder – Less intense “highs” with mood changes and symptoms of depression or “low” moods. Low moods may include:

- Lack of energy
- Little or no joy in doing things
- Wanting too little or too much sleep
- Eating too much or too little
- A lack of desire to do things
- Feeling hopeless

Cyclothymic (sy-kloe-THIE-mek) Disorder – When you have “highs” and “lows” many times over a period of at least 2 years. They are not intense enough or do not last long enough for the doctor to say you have bipolar disorder 1 or 2.

## What can you do?

Treatment can be helpful for people with bipolar. This can include medicine, talk therapy, both medicine and talk therapy, or brain stimulation.

If you take medicines, take them exactly as the doctor orders and for as long as they are prescribed. Tell your doctor if you feel they are not working or not working well enough.

## Be safe with medicines.

- Tell your doctor about other doctors who care for you and the medicines you get from them.
- Be honest with your doctor about any alcohol or drugs you use.
- Do not use illegal drugs, drink alcohol, or take bipolar medicine with other medicines that slow breathing. Mixing medicines used to treat bipolar can lead to overdose or death.
- Do not share or sell any medicines prescribed for you. They could be harmful to someone else.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant so that together you can decide on the best medication for a healthy pregnancy. If you don't want to become pregnant you can ask your doctor about birth control choices.
- Store medicine in a safe place and out of reach of others. This may include children, family, friends and guests.
- Safely dispose of any unused bipolar medicine at the end of treatment. Ask your pharmacy or your doctor how you can dispose of it safely.
- To find a place to turn in unused medicines you can call (800) 882-9539 or visit [www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-drug-take-back-locations](http://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-drug-take-back-locations).



## Know the warning signs.

A warning sign is our body's way of telling us there could be something wrong.

Warning signs that mean you should call your doctor or call 9-1-1:

- Thoughts of harming yourself or others
- Seeing things others do not see
- Hearing things others do not hear
- Thoughts of having special abilities that you want to act on

If you ever need help or have questions and cannot reach your doctor you can also call:

- Passport's Behavioral Health Crisis Line at (844) 800-5154
- Passport's Nurse Advise Line at (800) 606-9880
- Suicide Prevention and Crisis Lifeline – Call or Text 988 or (800) 273-8255

If you need help finding a doctor or finding mental health treatment, we can help. Please call us at (800) 578-0603 (TTY: 711).