

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar Disorder is a Serious Illness

People with bipolar disorder may have extreme mood swings. Sometimes they may feel very low (depression). Sometimes they may feel very high (mania). Having a period of mania or depression is called an episode. Check all the episodes you have below. Talk with your doctor about your episodes.

Types of Episodes

Depression (Low)

People with bipolar disorder can feel very sad. They may not even want to get out of bed or eat. They do not enjoy doing things they used to do. They may think of harming themselves or of suicide.

Mania (High)

Mania is the other side of bipolar disorder. Mania may start with a good feeling. Or it may make a person feel very irritable and angry. People with mania may do very risky things.

Hypomania

Hypomania is like mania, but milder. A person may feel good. They may think they are getting more things done. But the “feel good” stage can change into full-blown mania or depression.

Mixed

Feelings of mania and depression can also go back and forth in the same day. This is called a mixed episode. A person with a mixed episode can be at risk for suicide.

Bipolar disorder is a life-long illness. But today there are many treatments for people with this illness. Work with your doctor to find what is best for you.