



Bipolar Disorder (Overview)



Overview

This disorder affects your mood and your energy levels. It's also known as "manic depression." With it, you have periods, called "manic episodes," during which you feel happy and full of energy. You also have "depressive episodes." During these times you feel sad, hopeless and tired. You can even have episodes that are a mix of these intense feelings. These extreme mood swings can disrupt your life.

Causes

We don't know what causes bipolar disorder. Many things may be involved. It tends to run in families. It may involve your genetics and differences in the way your brain works.

Symptoms

Symptoms can vary depending on your specific type of bipolar disorder. But in general, during a manic episode you feel elated and very energetic. You may sleep little, and you may try to do a lot of things at once. You may talk very fast and excitedly, and feel like your mind is racing. And, you may do risky things. During a depressive episode, you feel very sad, empty and hopeless. You may have trouble sleeping and concentrating. It may be hard for you to remember things. You may feel like you can't enjoy anything. You may think about death.

Treatment

Bipolar disorder can be treated with medications. It can also be treated with talk therapy, which can help you learn to recognize and manage your symptoms. You may need long-term support. In some severe cases, electroconvulsive therapy can help. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.

Actor portrayals in photos

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