

Understanding **Bipolar Depression**

What is Bipolar I disorder?

This is a mental illness of mood swings in which there is at least one lifetime manic or mixed episode. Patients may also have had one or more major episodes of depression.

What is Bipolar II disorder?

This is a mental illness characterized by at least one episode of hypomania and at least one episode of major depression. These individuals have not experienced a full manic episode.

What is Bipolar Depression?

This term refers to the depressive phase of a bipolar disorder. Most people with bipolar disorder will eventually experience one or more depressive episodes.

What is the impact of the disease?

Bipolar disorder is among the top 10 causes of disability in the United States and the sixth-leading worldwide cause of disability.¹ This disorder can result in significant loss of quality of life and functioning, placing a great deal of stress upon the family and personal relationships, often resulting in loss of employment and marital difficulties. Bipolar disorder can double a person's risk of early death from obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.²

What are the risk factors for a bipolar disorder?

Many factors, acting together, produce this illness with no single cause being identified. Children with a parent or sibling with bipolar disorder are 4 to 6 times more likely to develop the illness. Severe life stress can trigger the disorder in those who have an inherited tendency.³

How is bipolar depression treated?

There are now three FDA-approved treatments for bipolar depression:

1. fluoxetine and olanzapine combination
2. quetiapine immediate or extended-release
3. lurasidone

Your mental health provider will work with you to decide which treatment will work best for you.

References:

1. National Alliance on Mental Illness. A Primer on Depressive, Bipolar and Anxiety Illnesses 2013
2. Roshanaei-Moghaddam B, Katon W. Premature Mortality from General Medical Illnesses among Persons with Bipolar Disorder: A Review. *Psychiatric Services*. 2009;60(2):147-156
3. Nurnberger JI, Jr, Foroud T. Genetics of bipolar affective disorder. *Curr Psychiatry Rep*. 2000 Apr;2(2): 147-157