

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar mood disorder has highs, called mania, and lows, called depression. Sufferers usually change regularly between highs and lows but they can stay with one mood for weeks or even years. Then suddenly, without warning, the mood can change. This can be in response to something happening in their life or for reasons unknown.

If you think you are suffering from any of these symptoms, or know a young person who is - **seek professional advice early for the best chance of optimising health.**

Signs and Symptoms

Bipolar is a mixture of high and low moods - each have their own symptoms.

Highs

- High self-esteem
- Increased energy
- Aggressive, grumpy, hostile
- High interest in sex
- Talking faster than normal
- Not sleeping
- Hallucinations or delusions – hearing or thinking things that aren't happening

Lows

- Low self-esteem
- Self-neglect
- Guilt over things that aren't their fault
- Insomnia. Change in sleeping habits, sleeps more
- Change in appetite or weight. Refusal to eat, losing a lot of weight
- Lack of control over emotions
- Lost interest activities that use to bring happiness
- Lowered pain tolerance
- Lowered concentration and memory
- Lowered energy
- Increased drug and alcohol use
- Talking a lot slower than normal

Getting help

If you are worried about yourself or others and need help some good places to start are:

Kids help line

24 hour free and confidential telephone and online counselling services. They will listen to you and will try to help you with what to do and where to go next for help.

Phone: 1800 55 1800

Online: www.kidshelpline.com.au

Lifeline

24 hour free and confidential telephone counselling service

Phone: 13 11 14

Friends and family who want advice can also contact the Lifeline information line between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Lifeline can provide information about services in your area and ideas about how to get further help.

Phone: 1300 13 11 14

Online: www.lifeline.org.au

A good friend

Talk to someone you know and trust and get them to help you find out information.

Your doctor (GP)

Make an appointment with your GP to talk about what you are feeling and experiencing. They are trained to help you and know who else you might benefit from speaking with.

Your public hospitals

Most public hospitals have emergency departments that are open 24 hours. You should not hesitate to go to the hospital in case of an emergency.