

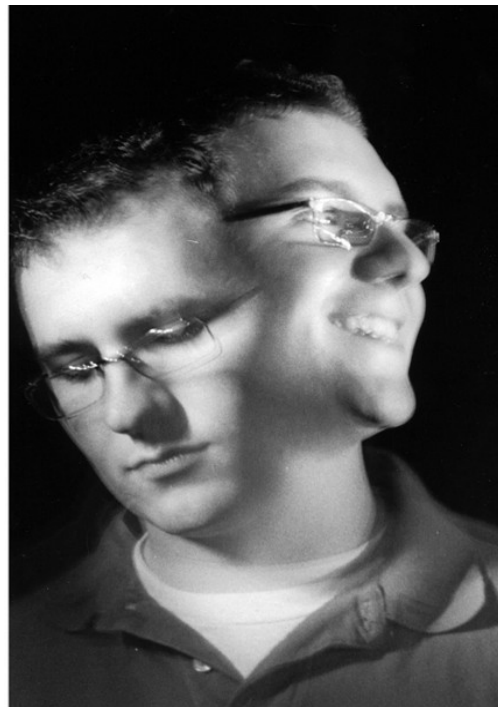
## If you are Bipolar...

- Try to distract yourself from negative thoughts, and surround yourself with supportive people.
- Have a daily routine, and try not to deviate away from it.
- Distract yourself from unrealistic and negative thoughts.
- Eat healthy and exercise regularly.
- Avoid making important decisions when you are unwell.
- Keep a "mood diary" and write in it daily.
- Try to avoid busy, crowded areas when you are unwell.
- If your moods persist or worsen, or if you think about harming yourself or others, please contact your doctor immediately.



## Facts about Bipolar

- Currently 30-50% of individuals with bipolar are not getting treatment.
- Winston Churchill and Beethoven were both bipolar, and led very successful lives.
- 50% of people with bipolar have a parent with a mood disorder.
- 70% of people with bipolar have a sibling or a close relative with a mood disorder.
- At least 1/4 people with bipolar will attempt suicide at least once in their lifetime.



# Bi-Polar Disorder



Box 403, 203 Patricia St.  
Hudson Bay, SK S0E 0Y0  
Phone~ (306) 865-3064  
Fax~ (306) 865-3391

[hbfamilyandsupport@sasktel.net](mailto:hbfamilyandsupport@sasktel.net)  
[www.hbfamilyandsupport.ca](http://www.hbfamilyandsupport.ca)

24 Hour Crisis Line  
(North East Region)  
1-800-611-6349

# What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder is characterized by mood swings between states of extreme elation and severe depression.

- People with bipolar disorder ride an emotional roller coaster, swinging from the heights of elation to the depths of depression without external cause.
- People will experience manic and depressive episodes.
- Manic episodes are a period of unrealistically heightened euphoria, extreme restlessness, and excessive activity characterized by disorganized behavior and impaired judgment.
- The person will feel unusually cheerful, and optimistic. They will show pressured speech (the rapid outpouring of speech in which words seem urgent for expression) and rapid flight of ideas (rapid speech and changes of topic)
- Manic episodes will be followed by depressive episodes, where the individual will be at an extreme low.

## Who gets Bipolar? And what causes it?

- No one really knows what exactly causes bipolar, but it is strongly linked to genetics and chemical imbalances in the brain.
- If you have a parent or sibling with bipolar you have a 20% chance of having it.
- Usually the illness will appear suddenly, sometimes with the onset of life stressors.
- Episodes of mania can last for months, but depressive episodes last far longer.
- Bipolar commonly onsets in a persons early 20's, but it may also occur in early childhood and later in life.
- 90% of cases are diagnosed before the age of 30.
- More than 2 million Americans have bipolar disorder.
- It occurs equally in males and females.

# Symptoms of Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar symptoms are different for everyone. Some people will cycle more slowly, or rapidly from one mood to another. Some people may go for years without an occurrence of manic or depressive episodes, and remain in a "normal" state. Other frequently suffer from both episodes. There are different types of symptoms for both manic and depressive episodes.

## Manic Episode Symptoms

- Overly happy, excited
- Behave strangely
- Talk rapidly
- Make outrageous plans
- Become easily distracted
- Very high sex drive
- Believe they have super powers

## Depressive Episode Symptoms

- Suddenly sad, empty, and lonely
- Frequent crying
- Lose or gain weight
- Low energy, headaches
- Focus on death, become morbid
- Attempt suicide
- Feel guilty, worthless, or helpless
- Unable to think clearly

# Diagnosis of Bipolar

The diagnosis of bipolar is made by a clinician based on clinical findings, after a complete medical history and physical examination. Several types of medications such as certain steroids and antibiotics will cause symptoms similar to that of mania. The use of substances such as amphetamines and cocaine may also mimic a manic stage. Also certain organic and medical causes will look like the symptoms of bipolar, such as strokes and syphilis. This makes the diagnosis of bipolar difficult, and clinicians must be extremely thorough when doing so.

## Treatment

- Most individuals, even the most severe cases, will be able to stabilize their mood swings and other symptoms through proper treatment.
- To treat episodes of mania and depression, doctors will prescribe mood stabilizers.
- The most common drug prescribed is Lithium.
- Lithium is generally very effective in treating episodes and preventing reoccurrences.
- The response to lithium treatment may take several days.
- Without treatment 10-15% of people with bipolar will commit suicide.
- Lithium is the only drug found that will decrease suicide.