

# WHAT IS BIPOLAR AFFECTIVE DISORDER? (bi-pole-ar a-feck-tiv dis-or-da)?

▄ Everybody has days when they feel really happy or really sad. These feelings are normal. Some people feel really happy or really sad for no reason at all, this is called *Bipolar Affective Disorder* (it used to be called Manic Depression).

▄ The way that people with Bipolar Disorder can feel happy all the time can be scary, because they do not know what they are doing sometimes and may do things that they would not normally do. People sometimes call this being 'manic'. This is NOT the same as a 'maniac' although people often get confused and say this. People with a mental illness are NOT maniacs!!



▄ People with Bipolar also have episodes of extreme depression, or extreme sadness. This feeling can be just as scary as being happy all the time because they still may do things that they would not usually do.



▄ In order to have Bipolar Disorder, the doctor must be able to see that the person has been both manic and depressed.

## **Some common signs of Bipolar Disorder are:**

### ***When depressed:***

- Ⓢ **No energy**
- Ⓢ **Finding it hard to sleep or sleeping all the time**
- Ⓢ **Feeling so sad that you want to cry all the time or cannot cry at all**
- Ⓢ **Losing weight or putting on a lot of weight**
- Ⓢ **Not enjoying the things they used to enjoy**
- Ⓢ **Being tired or cranky**

### ***When Manic***

- Ⓢ **feeling 'high'**
- Ⓢ **Feeling irritable or cranky**
- Ⓢ **Being more talkative than usual and talking quickly**
- Ⓢ **Not needing or wanting sleep**
- Ⓢ **Being easily distracted**
- Ⓢ **Doing or saying things that can be embarrassing to others**
- Ⓢ **Spending lots of money, more than usual**
- Ⓢ **Not realising danger**
- Ⓢ **Talking very fast and changing subjects all the time**

## **What is the Treatment for Bi-Polar Disorder?**



**■ Bi Polar Disorder can be treated by medication such as LITHIUM, EPILUM, and TEGRATOL. If someone is on these medications they need to have regular checkups by their doctor.**

**■ These are all called what is known as mood stabilisers (a bit like trainer wheels on a bicycle!) and they help the person keep a more even mood. Sometimes they may also take an anti-depressant (to treat the depression) if they also get anxious, or another type of medication if they also have psychosis (eg hearing voices, believing things which are not real).**

**■ All people experience bipolar disorder in different ways and it can take a while to find the right sort and amount of medication.**

**■ Treatment can also include counselling and other sorts of ‘talking’ treatments.**



**Sometimes they may need to go to hospital for a while to receive the treatment, or else they stay at home and visit a clinic or doctor.**

**Sometimes people get unwell again even when they are taking their medication and trying their hardest. This may be because of a stressful event. It is no-one's fault. It is important they, and you and your family, know what to do if you think they are getting unwell and get help as quickly as possible.**

