

## About Type 1 Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder, also known as manic depression, is a mental illness caused by a number of factors including neurological, biological, emotional, and environmental factors. It is typically characterized as mood cycling from manic, or extra happy, moods to depressed, or extra sad, moods.

Many people are not aware that in the last few years doctors have begun diagnosing bipolar disorder as two different types, based on how the moods cycle in the patient. Bipolar disorder type 1, also known as raging bipolar disorder, is diagnosed when the patient has at least one manic episode lasting at least one week or longer. Bipolar disorder type two, also known as rapid cycling bipolar disorder, is diagnosed when the patient has at least one manic episode and one depressive episode within four days to one week.

Hypomania is a severe form of mania that typically occurs in bipolar disorder type 1 patients. This state occurs because the patient is almost constantly up; the normal state for the patient is 1 of mania. Therefore, mood cycling in bipolar disorder type 1 patients often involves mania combined with the mood change. Mania combined with mania creates hypomania. Hypomania also can be accompanied by psychotic symptoms such as the patient becoming delusional or having hallucinations. This is a very simplistic way to describe how hypomania and mixed episodes occur.

Mixed episodes also often occur with bipolar disorder type 1. A mixed episode is hard to explain to the general public. It consists of being both happy and sad, up and down, all at the same time. Generally, this translates into the patient being very depressed emotionally, but displaying symptoms of mania such as inability to concentrate and lack of sleep.

Bipolar disorder type 1 is the most common type of bipolar disorder, and the most treatable. Because bipolar disorder type 1 typically manifests itself in the form of long manic periods with possibly one or two short depressive periods each year, treatment options are much more simple. Since mania requires one type of medication and depression requires another type of medication, the ability to treat only mania makes finding effective medications a much simpler task. Mood stabilizers are also quite effective with type 1 bipolar disorder, without the use of mania or depression medications.

The symptoms that the bipolar disorder type 1 patient experiences determines the type of mania medication used to control the excessive moods. In cases of mild but constant mania, lithium is the drug of choice. However, in cases in which mixed mania or hypomania are consistently present, a stronger drug or anti-

psychotic, such as Depakote, is typically prescribed.

Bipolar type 1 is also the likeliest candidate for treatment via Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). This is because the patient is most often in a state that allows them to easily focus their mind on rationalizing situations, recognizing triggers, and suppressing severe episodes. However, when the patient displays symptoms of hypomania, as some bipolar type 1 patients often do, cognitive behavioral therapy is not as effective during these episodes.

Overall, bipolar disorder type 1 is easily controlled through appropriate treatment and medications. If you experience any symptoms of bipolar disorder type 1 you should contact your doctor to make arrangements for diagnostic testing and to discuss treatment options. Ultimately, the patient is responsible for their own illness, and therefore, their own treatment.