

Going Nuts or Just Normally Moody? (Bipolar Tests)

Bipolar disorder is an illness that is illustrated by extreme mood changes, from being manically euphoric to the very depressed and vice versa. This disorder is also known as manic-depressive illness. Changes in the mood to the extremes are constantly occurring, this can happen within hours, days, or months. Bipolar disorder typically appears in the late teenage years and continues until death. There are also cases wherein the illness starts as early as childhood or as delayed as late adult years.

Although a lot of people experience mood swings every now and then, only a small group really experience radical changes in their moods which are highly characteristic of bipolar disorder. This illness can heavily affect everyday living of the sufferer. It can have a huge impact on their relationships with significant others, occupation, academics, and their day to day interaction with other people.

Are you quite curious if you're afflicted with this unlucky pestilence of a disease? Here are some of the signs and symptoms that you can check yourself with:

Signs and symptoms of depressive phase

- ? pessimistic, have long moments of crying
- ? a feeling of hopelessness
- ? low self-esteem
- ? diminished libido
- ? progressive decrease in energy and activities of daily living
- ? apathetic
- ? antisocial
- ? cognitive difficulties
- ? always anxious and irritable
- ? changes in weight (weight loss or gain)
- ? either insomnia or oversleeping
- ? abuse of drugs or alcoholic substances
- ? suicidal ideations

Signs and symptoms of manic phase

- ? extremely euphoric
- ? aggressive

- ? impulsive, irresponsibly wild
- ? excessively adventurous and involved in activities that are life threatening (sex, drugs, violence, excessive spending)
- ? insomniac
- ? flight of ideas, exceedingly talkative
- ? very outgoing
- ? self-centered; sometimes with hallucinations or delusions
- ? easily distracted, restless
- ? no idea that their behavior is causing problems

If you have any of these symptoms and these odd behaviors are causing disruptions in your normal life, it is best for you to seek professional help.

There may be numerous tests out there that are used to differentiate a bipolar sufferer from the run-of-the-mill sad and/or energetic individuals, but there is no exact specific test. This is because the signs and symptoms of this illness are very similar to other mental aberrations like ADHD, borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, or substance abuse disorders.

To diagnose the disorder, physicians provide a battery of tests to potential patients. The following are the basic tests that these professionals use:

- ? Medical examinations. This is used to assess the patient for other probable grounds of the mood swings he or she experiences.
- ? Oral and written psychiatric questionnaire or evaluations
- ? Family history. Bipolar disorder have a tendency to run in families
- ? Medical history. There may be medications that the patient is using or has used that could have triggered the mood swings.
- ? Interview family members and significant others regarding the patient's behavior. These people are usually the first witnesses of the disorder unfolding in the patient.

Although the doctor may be armed with these tests to help him diagnose a patient, it is quite difficult for the doctor if the patient him or herself doesn't recognize the problem. It is therefore imperative for the doctor to have an absolute and careful history of the patient's mood swing episodes. Compared to normal happiness, a person suffering the mania stage is extremely happy for four consecutive days at the very least. These patients are also easily distracted, very talkative, and has a flight of ideas.

The disorder is suspected to individuals who have previously suffered from a depression and had a quick and excellent response to the treatment, but had frequent relapses which are followed by a disintegration to respond to

antidepressant treatment.

But with early diagnosis, the disorder can be easily controlled. A combination of psychopharmacologic medications and psychotherapy may just do the trick. A strong emotional support from family and friends is also imperative for the patient who's suffering from this disorder. Just make sure you choose the right medical professional to help you or a friend in need. You may find the best help even from only searching through the net as some institutions have websites of their own.

Just remember, anybody who is suspect to any mental disorder is innocent until examined and diagnosed by a legitimate doctor.