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# Mood Disorder Symptoms, Causes and Effect

Mood disorders encompass a wide array of mood issues, such as major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder and bipolar disorder. Approximately 20.9 million American adults suffer from these disorders.



## What Are the Types of Mood Disorders?

Major depression is the most common mood disorder. This debilitating illness causes mental anguish and physical ailments. It often prevents normal daily function. While some people with depression may experience only one episode of major depression in a lifetime, most endure multiple episodes.

Dysthymic disorder, or dysthymia, is a milder form of depression. It may not hinder a person's ability to function in daily life.

Bipolar disorder (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/bipolar-disorder/>), also called manic-depressive illness, is less common. Even so, it affects about 5.7 million American adults. Bipolar disorder is a combination of extreme elation, which is known as mania, and depression.

## **Depressive Disorders and Major Depressive Disorder**

Dysthymia is diagnosed when a person suffers from depression for two or more years. Although it is not as debilitating as major depression, dysthymia can prevent normal functioning. People with dysthymia can also experience episodes of major depression.

Depressive disorders and major depressive disorder differ in severity and length of symptoms. Minor depression is defined by a period of at least two weeks of depression. Minor depressive episodes do not fully meet the criteria for major depression but can develop into major depression if left untreated.

Other forms of depression exist as well. Psychotic depression occurs when psychosis, a complete break from reality, and depression are both present. Postpartum depression (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/living-with-postpartum-depression/>) is sometimes experienced by new mothers. This form of depression results from physical and hormonal changes combined with the pressure of caring for a newborn. Seasonal affective disorder is a type of depression that affects people during times of decreased sunlight, particularly in the winter months when the days are shorter.

## **Bipolar Disorder**

Bipolar disorder is a dangerous and debilitating disorder that causes a person's mood, activity and energy levels to shift unexpectedly. People with bipolar disorder experience severe mania, and they may or may not have episodes of depression. They usually have some periods of partial or full stability as well.



## **Substance-Induced Mood Disorders**

The most common psychiatric co-occurring disorders are substance abuse and mood disorders. It is common for people with mood disorders to turn to substance abuse. The substance abuse, in turn, exacerbates the effects of the mood disorder. With careful assessment and screening, a psychiatrist can better distinguish between symptoms of mood disorder and substance intoxication or withdrawal. Some people experience reduced cravings for substances once their co-occurring depression or bipolar disorder is treated.

## **What Causes Mood Imbalances?**

What causes mood imbalances is difficult to pinpoint. Depression (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/depression-symptoms-causes-and-effects/>) is thought to be caused by a combination of environmental, psychological, biological and genetic factors. The most enduring theories involve neurotransmitters, which are chemicals in the brain, causing an imbalance that leads to depression. So far, this theory has been difficult to verify.

Scientists are still studying the causes of bipolar disorder, but the consensus is that bipolar disorder is caused by several factors working together. As bipolar disorder tends to be hereditary, researchers are currently trying to find a gene that may increase the risk of developing the disorder. Brain imaging studies show that the brains of people with bipolar disorder and depression differ from healthy brains, which suggests that brain structure and functioning may play a role in the development of mood disorders.

## Emotional Symptoms of Mood Disorders

Emotional symptoms of mood disorders are not the same for all people. Emotional symptoms of depression include:

- ✔ Thoughts of and attempts at suicide
- ✔ Loss of interest in activities that were pleasurable in the past
- ✔ Unyielding anxiety, sadness or feelings of emptiness
- ✔ Feelings of worthlessness, helplessness or guilt
- ✔ Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism

Emotional symptoms of mania include:

- ✔ Prolonged periods of elation
- ✔ Restlessness
- ✔ Irritability, agitation or excessive energy
- ✔ Feelings of grandiosity
- ✔ Impulsive, risky or hedonistic behavior

## Physical Symptoms of Mood Disorder

As with emotional symptoms, physical symptoms of mood disorder may differ from one person to the next. Physical symptoms of depression include:

- ✔ Decreased energy or fatigue
- ✔ Headaches, body aches, pains, cramps or digestive problems

- ✓ Difficulty remembering details, making decisions or concentrating
- ✓ Loss of appetite or overeating
- ✓ Excessive sleeping or insomnia

### Physical symptoms of mania include:

- ✓ Racing thoughts and jumping from one idea to the next
- ✓ Pressured or rapid speech
- ✓ Increased goal-directed activities
- ✓ Being easily distracted
- ✓ Insomnia
- ✓ Hypersexuality

## Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of a Mood Imbalance

People with mood disorders tend to alienate friends and family. They often have trouble in school and at work and have difficulty keep a job. Those with mania tend to have problems with authority figures. Those with depression have a high risk of suicide. With mania comes the risk of death, injury or trauma (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/trauma-symptoms-causes-and-effects/>) caused by reckless and dangerous behavior.

## Is There a Test or Self-Assessment I Can Do?

Mood disorder tests are available on the Internet, but their reliability is questionable. If you suspect you have depression or bipolar disorder, you should speak with a doctor. Talk to your general practitioner, who should be able to help you or refer you to a mental health professional.

If you need help finding treatment on mood disorder (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/mood-disorder-treatment-program-options/>), please don't hesitate to call us at 1-866-953-3974. We are here 24/7 to assist you.

## **Mood Medication: Mood-Stabilizing Drug Options**

Depression is typically treated with antidepressant medications.

Antidepressants work to restore neurotransmitters. The specifically targeted neurotransmitters are serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine. The most commonly prescribed antidepressants for depression are fluoxetine (Prozac), citalopram (Celexa), sertraline (Zoloft), paroxetine (Paxil) and escitalopram (Lexapro). These drugs are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors.



Bipolar disorder is first treated with mood-stabilizing medications. The mood stabilizers most commonly prescribed for the illness are lithium, valproic acid (Depakote), carbamazepine (Tegretol), lamotrigine (Lamictal) and oxcarbazepine (Trileptal).

## **Mood Drugs: Possible Options**

Mood drug options include different types of antidepressants. You may be prescribed serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors. SNRIs include duloxetine (Cymbalta) and venlafaxine (Effexor). Another available antidepressant is bupropion (Wellbutrin), which manipulates dopamine.

Some people with bipolar disorder require medications other than or in conjunction with mood-stabilizing medications. Antipsychotics (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/about-antipsychotic-drugs/>) and/or antidepressants are used in such cases. Atypical antipsychotics include aripiprazole (Abilify), olanzapine (Zyprexa), risperidone (Risperdal), ziprasidone (Geodon) and clozapine (Clorazil).

## Medication Side Effects

The side effects of antidepressants are usually mild. Common side effects include drowsiness, blurred vision, constipation, dry mouth, agitation, drowsiness, nausea and headache.

Some side effects of bipolar disorder medications often go away within the first few weeks. Among the side effects are loss of coordination, excessive thirst, frequent urination, blackouts, seizures, slurred speech, irregular or pounding heartbeat, and hallucinations. Most of these side effects can be attributed to lithium; however, lithium is the most reliable drug used to treat bipolar disorder.

## Mood-Stabilizing Drug Addiction: Dependence and Withdrawal

None of the medications listed are generally considered addictive, but if you stop taking your medication suddenly, you may experience symptoms of withdrawal. You also risk having a relapse of your mood disorder if you stop taking your medication. If you have trouble with your medication, ask your doctor how you should stop taking it.

## Medication Overdose

Lithium has a moderate risk of overdose. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated while taking the drug, and never take more than prescribed. Read the leaflet accompanying the medication. If you experience any signs of toxicity, go to the emergency room immediately.

## Depression and Mood Disorder

Depression is a mood disorder that is manageable (<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/how-to-deal-with-depression.aspx>) with proper treatment. Depression often accompanies bipolar disorder.

## Dual Diagnosis: Addiction and Mood-Related Problems

Instances (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2851027/>) of co-occurrence between addiction and mood-related problems are common. For mood disorders to be treated properly, the substance abuse must be controlled and treated.

## Getting Help for a Mood Disorder

We would be happy to assist you with getting help for a mood disorder (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/how-to-find-help-treating-a-mood-disorder/>). Please contact us at 1-866-953-3974.

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**Living With: Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder**

# (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/living-with-premenstrual-dysphoric-disorder/>)

*Morgan Adams in Cognitive*

Sharing a life and a home with someone who has premenstrual dysphoric disorder can be a challenge if you are unprepared. The symptoms of PMDD, if left untreated, can be disruptive to the sufferer's life and the lives of everyone she lives with. Fortunately, there are studies, treatments and support to help everyone cope with the disorder that can be debilitating. To understand how to live with PMDD, you must first know a bit more... Continue Reading (<http://www.psychguides.com/guides/living-with-premenstrual-dysphoric-disorder/>)

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