

Medication and Lifestyle

Medications that have proven to be effective as maintenance treatment and with which there is a lot of experience are, for example, lithium carbonate and valproic acid. Certain antipsychotics have also proven to be effective as mood stabilizers, such as olanzapine and aripiprazole.

These medications are also often used when someone has become manic. In the case of bipolar depression, antidepressants are also regularly used, however this should be treated with caution since there is a risk that someone will become manic again.

When it comes to lifestyle, there are also many things that can help a person to remain stable. Sufficient sleep is very important. It is also helpful to lead as regular a life as possible. Increased stress can also destabilize a person, so stress should be avoided as much as possible.

Bipolar disorder almost never goes away but is often a lifelong condition. The intensity and frequency of the depressive and manic episodes can change as people get older.

More Information

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BIPOLAR DISORDER

Bipolar Disorder



What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a chronic disorder that causes people to be very sensitive to having depressive and manic episodes.

It is still difficult to say precisely how often bipolar disorder occurs but, according to recent studies, it is estimated that about 2% to 4% of all people will develop bipolar disorder at some point in their lives.

Bipolar disorder usually first appears when a person is between the ages of 15 and 24 years, but it often manifests itself for the first time later in life as well.



Depressive Episodes

A depressive episode is when someone suffers from a depressed mood for at least two weeks, can no longer enjoy activities that he or she normally did enjoy, has a change in appetite (no appetite or an increased appetite), has trouble sleeping and has little energy. A depression in someone who has bipolar disorder is called a bipolar depression.

Manic Episodes

When someone has a manic episode, the opposite actually occurs. Someone has a lot of energy for at least two weeks, a decreased need for sleep, big (unrealistic) plans, he or she is very cheerful and happy or rather easily angered, and he or she is showing increased impulsivity (which can also make people do unwise, harmful or dangerous things).

Examples include really dangerous behavior (driving fast, starting fights) or spending a lot of money, taking out loans or giving away all possessions. Someone having a manic episode is very sick, and the people close to him or her are (rightly) worried. A manic episode often leads to hospitalization in psychiatric hospital.

Cause and Treatment

The causes of bipolar disorder are still largely unknown. It is likely that genetic factors play an important role. It is very common that several other family members also have psychological problems. The treatment of bipolar disorder focuses on staying stable, having no manic and no depressive episodes. If someone has regular episodes, medication is almost always necessary. The treatment also pays a lot of attention to lifestyle.

Medications used are the so-called mood stabilizers. After someone has been sick two or three times, maintenance treatment is usually opted for. Then we know that the chance of someone getting sick again without medication is high.

If maintenance treatment is needed, your psychiatrist will make the most appropriate choice in consultation with you.

