

Bipolar disorder is a mood disorder. People with bipolar disorder have long periods of depression followed by brief periods of mania. There are two types of bipolar disorder, called Bipolar I and Bipolar II.

What is depression for bipolar disorder?

Symptoms of depression in bipolar disorder are similar to those of depression. The person will withdraw from friends and family. They lose interest in many of the things they used to enjoy. They have little motivation or energy. They may have difficulty falling asleep or sleeping all the time. They may either lose their appetite almost entirely or find they are eating much more than usual. They might think they are a failure or that they are a “bad” person.



What is mania?

Mania is a symptom of bipolar disorder. Someone who is manic seems like they have more energy than is normal and an unusually high mood. The person behaves recklessly. They might speed, overspend, or gamble to excess. There may be risky sexual encounters. The person appears not to need sleep. If severe, they might hear things that are not there and lose touch with reality. They may believe they have special powers. Hypomania is a symptom of Bipolar II disorder. Hypomania is similar to mania, though it is milder than mania. It might not affect the person’s everyday life. These symptoms last several days but will return to depression.



Bipolar in autism

Although bipolar disorder may look somewhat different if the person has autism, the pattern of changes should be the same. That is, there must be significant changes in mood, in levels of activity, and in behavior and interests, which taken all together cause a decrease in his or her level of function. This decrease in function must persist for a period of several days or more. Also, both show the same lack of need for sleep during the manic phase. For the person with ASD, who often has disrupted sleep anyway, this would be above and beyond the usual level of difficulty.