

# Bi-Polar Disorder

## What is it?



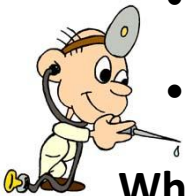
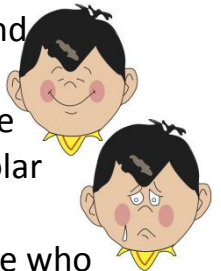
- **Bi-Polar Disorder**- a manic depressive illness in which periods of depression alternate with periods of mania or lesser degrees of excitement
  - Affects- less than 2% of the population to some degree, believed to be heredity, genetic defect if still unknown, equally common in both men and women, begins in the teens, 20's and thirties
- **Begins**- with depression, one period of mania during the illness, the depression lasts 3 to 6 months

## Signs and Symptoms:

- **Adverse Effects of Lithium**- muscle twitching, tremor, nausea, vomiting, thirst, diarrhea, weight gain and excessive urination, make psoriasis and acne worse, thyroid hormone levels to fall, headache, mental confusion, seizures, drowsiness, abnormal heart rhythms
- **Adverse Effects**- more likely to be caused in the elderly, women trying to become pregnant must stop taking lithium due to possible heart defects in the fetus

## Facts:

- **Bipolar I Disorder**- depression alternate with severe mania, more severe
  - **Bipolar II**- short depression episodes alternate with hypomania, less severe, occurs with seasons as fall and winter or spring and summer
  - **Cyclothymic Disorder**- periods of depression and elation are less severe, last only for a few days, recur fairly often at irregular intervals, never leads to major mania or depression, may contribute to a person's success in business, achievement, leadership and artistic creativity , also can lead to alcohol and drug abuse
  - **Mixed Bi-Polar States**- experience both manic and depressive symptoms simultaneously, happens to about 1 in 3 with bipolar disorder
- **Women**- constitute for 15% having 4 or more episodes a year, those who cycle rapidly are more difficult to treat
- **Lithium**- reduces mood swings in about 70% of people with manic-depressive illness, no effect on normal mood, monitored with blood tests



## What can I do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**- about treatment, mood stabilizing drugs, anti-depressants, anticonvulsants, psychotherapy, phototherapy