



# You have been diagnosed with **bipolar** - how you can manage it.

**Bipolar is a serious mental health condition characterised by extreme mood swings - manic highs to depressive lows. This leaflet has been given to you as you've been diagnosed with bipolar.**

If you've been diagnosed with bipolar, you are not alone. Over 1 million people in the UK have bipolar but many of these individuals lead productive, happy and fulfilling lives.

The key to coping with bipolar is early diagnosis, accepting the illness and adapting your lifestyle so you can control the illness as much as possible. You can also help to deal with bipolar through medication, the right healthcare, therapy and self-management.

The earlier you receive treatment, the better. Even the mildest symptoms of bipolar can become very serious. Bipolar affects every aspect of our lives and can put individuals and their loved ones under immense stress.

## What happens now?

### Treating bipolar

There's no cure for bipolar but you can take medication to help manage the illness. Bipolar affects everyone differently and it can take time to find the right medication or combination of medications for you. Your doctor may refer you to specialist local NHS mental health services. Many people with bipolar are offered treatment from community mental health teams. These may include psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, and community psychiatric nurses.

### Understanding bipolar

As well as receiving the right medical support, you need to understand bipolar and how it can affect you and your loved ones. There are many organisations that can help you, including Bipolar UK. Our helpful services are there to support you, your family, and loved ones.

You can also manage bipolar by adapting your lifestyle and watching what you eat. You should eat a healthy, balanced diet, cut down on caffeine and alcohol, exercise regularly, try to sleep for seven to eight hours each night, avoid stress, and make sure you find ways to relax.

### Your family, friends and loved ones

Bipolar affects every aspect of your life and your family, friends and even colleagues can be put under stress. To understand and manage bipolar, you will need support. If you can, speak to family members, your partner or close friends. You could ask them to go with you to see your doctor or to other appointments.

Family members and friends may also have useful insight into your behaviour, which can be helpful for health professionals. Family members and loved ones should be involved in planning your treatment and care and, unless you don't want them to be, should be consulted by mental health professionals. Mental health teams should also give your family members clear information about your diagnosis and how they can also help you.

## Helpful services

Your local NHS mental health team will also run some hospital-based services. If your mood swings become extreme, you can have what is called a manic or severe depressive episode. When this happens, you may need to spend some time in hospital or you may need support from the community crisis team at home.

The community crisis team offers you treatment at home to avoid, if possible, you having to go to hospital. They may come to your house or offer treatment in a residential service or day centre, depending on what's available in your local area.

When you're experiencing a manic episode, you may need little if any sleep, talk very quickly, have rapid and uncontrollable thoughts, take risks, and be impulsive. You might not feel ill and might refuse treatment that you need to get well. If this happens, you might be admitted to hospital (sectioned) under the Mental Health Act. This will only happen against your wishes if it's in your best interests or to protect others.

## How you can help yourself

You can work with your doctor and other mental health professionals who are there to support you. You should make sure you involve your family and loved ones and find out as much as you can about the illness. It's also helpful to talk with other people who are also affected by bipolar.

You can understand how bipolar affects you as an individual by monitoring your moods and learn what can trigger your mood swings too. You should also learn how to manage your mood and mental health through adapting your lifestyle.

Bipolar UK also provides a range of services to support anybody affected by bipolar. These include:

- Our Support Line
- Our eCommunity, a free online forum
- Support Groups
- Specialist services for young people under 26
- One-to-one Mentoring
- Employment Support

**For more information about our support services,  
get in touch:**



Visit our website:  
[www.bipolaruk.org](http://www.bipolaruk.org)



Email us:  
[info@bipolaruk.org](mailto:info@bipolaruk.org)



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