

MOOD STABILIZER TREATMENT MENU

Mood stabilizers prevent both manic and depressive episodes in bipolar disorder. They treat manic and mixed symptoms including irritability, impulsivity, racing thoughts, insomnia, agitation, and anxiety.

LIFESTYLE

DARK NIGHTS

Sleeping in a pitch dark room (or with an eye mask) helps stabilize mood. You can further this effect by wearing blue-light blocking glasses in the evening. These orange glasses give a warm, yellowish hue to your vision and filter out the wavelengths of light that cause mood swings. However, they should only be worn in the evening (after 6pm and before 8am). moodtreatmentcenter.com/darktherapy.pdf

REGULAR ROUTINES

Sticking with a few daily routines at regular times (give or take 30 minutes) also sets the brain's internal clock and stabilizes mood. The most important activities to do at regular times are:

1. Waking up
2. Starting work or chores
3. Starting contact with other people
4. Exercise
5. Dinner

MEDICINE

LITHIUM

Benefits: very effective for depression and mania; prevents suicide; strengthens brain cells. Well tolerated in lower doses (for depression).

Risks: nausea, tremor, thirst, low thyroid, kidney problems.

ATYPICALS

Examples: Aripiprazole (abilify), asenapine (saphris), brexpiprazole (rexulti), cariprazine (vraylar), iloperidone (fanapt), lurasidone (latuda), olanzapine (zyprexa), paliperidone (invega), quetiapine (seroquel), risperidone (risperdal), ziprasidone (geodon).

Benefits: all treat mania and mixed states. Some also treat depression (e.g. quetiapine, lurasidone, cariprazine, olanzapine-fluoxetine combination).

Risks: weight gain, drowsiness, restlessness, diabetes, high cholesterol, tardive dyskinesia (permanent muscle twitching).

DEPAKOTE

Benefits: treats mania and mixed states.

Risks: stomach distress, fatigue, weight gain, hair loss, low blood count, liver problems.

CARBAMAZEPINE

Examples: equetro, carbamazepine, tegretol are the main ones. Oxcarbazepine/trileptal is sometimes better tolerated but not as effective.

Benefits: treats mania and mixed states.

Risks: fatigue, double-vision, allergic rash, pancreatitis, low sodium. Carbamazepine can lower the levels of many other drugs including birth control.

LAMOTRIGINE

Benefits: prevents depression and mania/mixed states, almost no side effects, but does not treat active mania or mixed states.

Risks: severe allergic rash (Stevens-Johnson)

CALCIUM CHANNEL BLOCKERS

Examples: nimodipine, isradipine, amlodipine

Benefits: treat mood swings that change daily or weekly. Well tolerated.

Risks: low blood pressure.

ALLOPURINOL

Benefits: this medication for gout has been successfully used experimentally for mania.

Risks: well tolerated but not well tested.

NATURAL

PROBIOTICS

Mechanism: reduces inflammation.

Benefits: depression, mania, memory, anxiety.

Dose: 1 per day of probiotic with *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* LG and *Bifidobacterium lactis* bb-12.

Brands: Usana Probiotic Sticks, Culturelle Baby Grow and Thrive Liquid, and Emergen-C Drink.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Mechanism: coats and protects brain cells; found in fish (salmon) and green leafy vegetables.

Benefits: prevents depression, mania, irritability.

Dose: 1,000-2,500mg daily of DHA + EPA (dose must have at least 1.5 times as much EPA as DHA)
moodtreatmentcenter.com/omega3.pdf

THERAPY

SOCIAL RHYTHM THERAPY

Through mood charting, clients learn which daily routines help stabilize their mood. The therapist also helps client build new skills to overcome the effects of bipolar on relationships and identity.

FAMILY THERAPY

The therapist helps families live more effectively with mood problems in the home. Conflict resolution and specific communication skills are taught.

EDUCATIONAL GROUP

In this weekly seminar a therapist teaches skills to live more effectively with bipolar. Much of the learning comes from other patients who have struggled with bipolar

SUPPORT GROUPS

Several local groups meet regularly to share information and support on living with bipolar: Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), First Presbyterian Church (for families and patients). The Mental Health Association keeps a listing of meeting times: www.triadmentalhealth.org.