

Educational Links (English):

- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/treatmentswellbeing/medicationsbipolardisorder.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.webmd.com/bipolar-disorder/guide/medications-bipolar-disorder>
- ❖ <http://www.webmd.com/bipolar-disorder/mood-stabilizing-medications-for-bipolar-disorder>
- ❖ <http://psycheducation.org/treatment/mood-stabilizers/>
- ❖ <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/topics/mental-health-medications/index.shtml>
- ❖ <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/bipolar-disorder/basics/treatment/con-20027544>

Emergencies:

Some of these medicines can have serious and adverse effects if taken in large quantities. If you have any symptoms that are different for you, talk to your doctor immediately. If you have serious unknown symptoms call 9-1-1 or visit the nearest emergency room.



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Lumos Psychiatric Services



Educational Booklet: Mood Stabilizers

Mood stabilizers are medications used to treat mood disorders. They serve to improve symptoms during acute manic, hypomaniacal, depressive and mixed episodes. They are the treatment of choice for Bipolar Disorder. They may have other uses not described in this brochure.

Many mood stabilizers are anticonvulsants, with the exception of lithium which is the oldest and best-studied mood stabilizer.

Before starting a mood stabilizer, tell your doctor if:

- ❖ Suffers from drug allergies
- ❖ Are pregnant or nursing
- ❖ Use over-the-counter or natural products
- ❖ Has heart problems
- ❖ Has liver problems
- ❖ Have thyroid problems
- ❖ Have kidney problems
- ❖ He has a history of pancreatitis
- ❖ Has blood problems

REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR MEDICATIONS AS INDICATED BY YOUR MEDICAL WITHOUT MAKING CHANGES IN FREQUENCY OR PRESCRIPTION DOSAGE.

Names of the most common mood stabilizers:

- ❖ Lithium (Eskalith, Cibalith)
- ❖ Lamotrigine (*Lamictal, Subvenite*)
- ❖ Valproate (*Depakote, Depakene, Divalproex*)
- ❖ Carbamazepine (*Tegretol, Equetro*)
- ❖ *Oxcarbazepine (Trileptal)*

Indications for the use of a mood stabilizer:

- ❖ Bipolar Disorder
- ❖ Epilepsy
- ❖ Migraine Prevention (Depakote)
- ❖ Chronic pain or neuropathy (Lamictal)
- ❖ Added therapy for Schizophrenia or Psychosis
- ❖ Added Therapy for Major Depression
- ❖ Chronic aggression or impulsivity

Most common side effects of mood stabilizers:

Medication	Most Common Side Effect	Long Term Effects
Lithium	Tremor (hands) Muscle weakness Stomach discomfort Diarrhea, vomiting or nausea Sed Dry mouth Urinating more frequently Concentration problems	Weight gain Thyroid problems Kidney problems acne
Valproate	Drowsiness Dizziness Tremor Stomach problems Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea	Weight Gain Hair Loss Changes in Liver Enzymes Decreased Platelets
Carbamazepine/ Oxcarbazepine	Drowsiness Dizziness Headache Blurred vision Stomach problems Nausea Vomiting	Decreased white blood cells in the blood Changes in liver enzymes
Lamotrigine	Dizziness Headache Double / blurred vision Nausea Drowsiness Rash	

Each of the mood stabilizers has different chemical actions in the body. If one of these medications doesn't work for you, or you have persistent side effects, your doctor may suggest another mood stabilizer, or two combination medications in dosages that you can tolerate.

Achieving the maximum effect of mood stabilizers (decreased symptoms) can take up to 2 weeks.

Blood tests should be done to monitor the levels of the drug in your body (lithium, carbamazepine and valproate) to determine the correct dose you need from the drug.

The medicine should not be discontinued unless your doctor tells you to.

General recommendations:

- ❖ See a psychiatrist for the treatment of your mental condition.
- ❖ If you are taking Carbamazepine, avoid taking grapefruit juice because it changes the effect of the medicine on your body.
- ❖ If you are taking Depakote, avoid taking aspirin because it changes the effect of the medicine on your body.
- ❖ If you are taking Lithium, stay hydrated and avoid the use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Ibuprofen) because it changes the effect of the drug on your body.
- ❖ If you take the medicines in liquid preparation do not mix them with any other liquid.
- ❖ Be patient about the response to medications.
- ❖ When taking your medications, be aware of any side effects that may occur.
- ❖ Avoid driving a car or operating machinery if you feel sedated or slow from thought.
- ❖ Do not discontinue medicines without first discussing it with your doctor.
- ❖ It is important to supplement the use of your medications by attending psychotherapy.

For questions or concerns, discuss it with your doctor.