

## Mood Disorders

**Mood disorders** are a [group of conditions](#) in which the individual's emotional state does not match their situation, and the mood disorder affects how they function. Affected individuals may be sad, uninterested, elated, or irritable.

This information sheet will focus on **depression** (major depressive disorder) and **bipolar disorder**.

### Depression (Major Depressive Disorder)

- **Depression** is when a person feels sad, depressed, or uninterested, and these feelings do not go away and the mood changes affect how the person functions. It is a common but **treatable** condition.
- Factors that **increase the risk** of depression include:
  - Genetics or family history
  - Certain health conditions
  - Changes in hormones
  - Changes in brain chemistry
  - Trauma
  - Lack of resources or support
  - Poor coping strategies (e.g. avoidance of problems)
  - Use of alcohol or drugs, such as marijuana
- **Symptoms** of depression differ from person to person. However, in combination, they trap people in a vicious cycle:
  - Feeling down, irritable, or uninterested in things
  - Feeling tired and unmotivated
  - Poor sleep
  - Struggling to concentrate, feeling hopeless, having negative or even suicidal thoughts
  - Not wanting to be with other people or do day-to-day activities
- Possible treatment strategies include:
  - Improving **sleep** and **exercise**
  - Managing **health conditions**
  - Using **antidepressants** to manage symptoms
  - Learning to deal with negative thoughts and improve coping skills using **cognitive behavioral therapy**

### How Common are Mood Disorders?

Among children with 22q11.2DS, about 3% have mood disorders. The proportion for depression is far higher in adults, as it is in the general population. Mood disorders are in general more common in females than males.

More studies are needed to find out how common mood disorders are among individuals with 22q11.2DupS.

### Facts about Depression

- Depression is NOT a weakness
- Depression is NOT a flaw
- Depression is NOT a fault
- A person with depression CANNOT just "snap out of it"
- Support IS available for individuals struggling with depression
- Affected individuals can recover!

### Having suicidal thoughts?

- Call 911 or the [emergency service number in your country](#)
- In the USA, you can also call or text 988 to get free and confidential help
- Go to the nearest hospital with an emergency department for help

## Mood Disorders (continued)

### Bipolar Disorder (Formerly called Manic Depression)

**Bipolar disorder** is a brain condition that happens when a person cycles through intense emotional highs and lows, often with a normal phase separating episodes. These extreme mood swings affect how they think, behave, and function. If left untreated, there may be serious complications.

There are various [subtypes](#) of bipolar disorder based on the severity and types of symptoms. Some other physical and mental health conditions may worsen bipolar disorder.

#### Manic Phase (High)

(3 or more symptoms, for at least a week)

- Abnormally upbeat or irritable
- Extreme self-confidence
- Decreased need for sleep
- Unusual talkativeness
- Racing thoughts
- Distractibility
- Excessive energy for activities
- Risky behavior or poor judgment

#### Depressive Phase (Low)

(5 or more symptoms, for at least two weeks)

- Depressed mood (can be irritability in children and teens)
- Loss of interest or pleasure in almost all activities
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Not able to sleep or sleeping too much
- Loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- Decreased ability to think or concentrate
- Thoughts or plans of suicide (Treat this seriously!)

- These factors may increase the risk for bipolar disorder:
  - Having a close relative with bipolar disorder or depression
  - Changes in the brain
  - Use of alcohol and drugs such as marijuana
- The affected person may also have **psychotic symptoms** (being out of touch with reality), e.g., believing one has special powers.
- The diagnosis of bipolar disorder is made based on the history of symptoms and the change in normal functioning.
  - There is no test *for* bipolar disorder, but lab tests can be used to rule out other conditions, e.g. thyroid disease
- Treatment
  - **Medications**, usually mood stabilizers, are used to control the symptoms
  - Education about the illness and its treatment for the patient and family
  - The affected individual is encouraged to **record their symptoms and improvement with treatment** to help with the management of their condition.

#### Bipolar Disorder is Manageable

With treatment and a healthy life style, symptoms can be controlled, the risk of relapse can be reduced, and the person can have improved work and social functioning.

#### Resources / References

- [Updated clinical practice recommendations for managing children with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome](#) – 2023
- [Understanding Depression: Symptoms, Causes and Treatments](#) – Mayo Clinic, AZ, USA
- [Depression \(major depressive disorder\)](#) – Mayo Clinic, AZ, USA
- [Bipolar Disorder](#) – Mayo Clinic, AZ, USA
- [Bipolar Disorder](#) – Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto, ON, Canada