



# Lithium metal for depression

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Lithium for depression: all you need to know

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Call our HelpLine at 800-950-6264, text "helpline" to 62640, or chat online. In a crisis, call or text 988.

All FDA warnings are at the end of this fact sheet. Please consult them before taking this medication.

Lithium is a mood stabilizer medication that works in the brain. It is approved for the treatment of bipolar disorder (also known as manic depression). Bipolar disorder involves episodes of depression and/or mania.

Symptoms of depression include:

Symptoms of mania include:

Lithium may also be helpful when prescribed "off-label" for depression, especially when combined with antidepressant medications. "Off-label" means that it hasn't been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for this condition. Your mental health provider should justify his or her thinking in recommending an "off-label" treatment. They should be clear about the limits of the research around that medication and if there are any other options.

Bipolar disorder requires long-term treatment. Do not stop taking lithium, even when you feel better. With input from you, your health care provider will assess how long you will need to take the medication. Missing doses of lithium may increase your risk for a relapse in your mood symptoms.

In order for lithium to work properly, it should be taken every day as ordered by your health care provider.

Periodically, your health care provider may ask you to provide a blood sample to make sure the appropriate level of medication is in your body and to assess for side effects, such as changes in blood cell counts or kidney function.

If you are planning on becoming pregnant, notify your health care provider so that he/she can best manage your medications. People living with bipolar disorder who wish to become pregnant face important decisions. It is important to discuss the risks and benefits of treatment with your doctor and caregivers.

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