Finding the right bipolar disorder medication

It can take a while to find the right bipolar medication and dose. Everyone responds to medication differently, so you may have to try several bipolar disorder drugs before you find the one that works for you. Be patient, but don’t settle for a bipolar medication that makes you feel lousy, either.

Once you've discovered the right bipolar disorder drug or drug cocktail, it may still take time to determine the optimal dose. In the case of mood stabilizing medications such as lithium, the difference between a beneficial dose and a toxic one is small. Continue taking your medication even after you feel better as the likelihood of having a relapse is very high. Frequent office visits to re-evaluate your bipolar medication needs and careful monitoring of symptoms and side effects will help you stay safe.

Learn about your bipolar disorder medication

When starting a new medication for bipolar disorder, educate yourself about how to take it safely. Questions to ask your doctor about any new prescription include:

- Are there any medical conditions that could be causing or exacerbating my mood swings?
- What are the side effects and risks of the medication you are recommending?
- When and how should I take this medication?
- Are there any foods or other substances I will need to avoid?
- How will this drug interact with my other prescriptions?
- How long will I have to take this medication?
- Will withdrawing from the drug be difficult if I decide to stop?
- Will my symptoms return when I stop taking the medication?