

The Causes of Bipolar Disorder

There's no single cause of bipolar disorder, but there are several factors that increase the likelihood that someone will develop the illness.



Genetics + Biology + Environment

Genetic Vulnerabilities: Bipolar disorder runs in families. Relatives of a person with bipolar disorder are at an increased risk of developing either bipolar disorder or depression.

Individual Biology: Chemical imbalances in the brain can contribute to the development of bipolar disorder.

Environmental Factors: Poverty, stress, and other hardships can act as a trigger and increase an individual's risk of developing bipolar disorder.



Risk Factors vs. Protective Factors

Risk Factors: Anything that increases the likelihood of developing or worsening bipolar disorder.

failing to use medication as prescribed	drug or alcohol abuse	lack of social support
poor coping skills	frequent stress	poor health (inadequate exercise and nutrition)

Protective Factors: Anything that reduces the likelihood of developing bipolar disorder, or anything that prevents the disorder from worsening.

compliance with medication	healthy lifestyle	effective coping skills
social support	use of treatment resources such as psychotherapy	structured schedule