Is There a Natural Way to Manage Bipolar Disorder?

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Is There a Natural Treatment for Bipolar Disorder?

If you're seeking a natural way to manage bipolar disorder, we've got some information that may be helpful for you!

Before you continue reading, you should know that these treatments are *not* meant to replace any medical therapies that your physician has recommended. Instead, they may be utilized in conjunction with traditional medicines that your physician has prescribed – unless your physician has suggested otherwise.

So, please continue reading for several natural ways to manage bipolar disorder.

What Are the Best Supplements for Bipolar Disorder?

Several supplements may be taken. For example:

- **Rhodiola** is an herb that is thought to reduce stress levels and may have positive effects on people who have depression. Although it isn't as potent as an antidepressant, it may have fewer side effects. It can be stimulating, so it may be an excellent herb to trial in those who need a "boost."
- **St. John's wort** is a popular is a popular supplement for the treatment of depression. However, it does have mixed reviews on the treatment of bipolar disorder and major depression. Exercise caution when taking this supplement, as research indicates that it may cause psychosis and can interact with several medications used to treat bipolar disorder.
- **S-adenosylmethionine**, or *SAMe*, is a supplement that is believed to reduce symptoms of major depression. However, it should be used under direct supervision of a physician because if misused in a bipolar person, it can cause mania.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids** work in a different way than other supplements. It is well known that omega-3 fatty acids reduce inflammation in the body. This reduction in inflammation not only may have a systemic effect on the body, but it may also improve mood! 300mg per day may be enough to see results.

Mind-Body Therapies for Bipolar

According to a 2013 study published in *Behaviour Research and Therapy,* **meditation** using a supervised mindfulness-based cognitive therapy approach saw a reduction in depression symptoms – and the reduction improved with the number of days they meditated!

2014 study published in the *Journal of Psychiatric Practice* indicated that **yoga** could potentially be a treatment for bipolar disorder.

According to Lisa Uebelacker, associate professor of psychiatry and human behavior in the Alpert Medical School of Brown University, "There is a reason to think that there are ways in which it might be wonderful and ways in

which it might not be safe. We are interested in studying hatha yoga for bipolar as an adjunctive treatment to pharmacotherapy."

The study indicated that most participants found yoga to be helpful, but several participants found it exacerbated pain, and a small amount felt the yoga practice made them feel "self-critical."

Other Natural Therapies to Try

- **Light therapy** involves timing exposure to light and dark to reset the circadian rhythm. It is thought that people with bipolar disorder may have interrupted circadian rhythms.
- **Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy (EMDR)** "uses a supervised program of eye movements, combined with actively remembering traumatic experiences, to improve symptoms." This type of treatment is thought to be helpful for people who have bipolar disorder as well as a personal history of trauma.
- Getting adequate **sleep** is important. Perhaps this isn't quite a "natural" treatment, but it is worth mentioning! According to *Medical News Today,* "Disturbed sleep is often linked to the ups and downs of bipolar disorder. During a manic phase, an individual may sleep very little, but during a low phase, they may sleep for a long time. Missing sleep can trigger a mood change. Getting enough sleep is essential to managing mood."

- **Dietary changes** can also be helpful! A 2011 study indicated that up to 68 percent of people with bipolar disorder are either overweight or obese. Furthermore, people who are bipolar are more likely to have binge eating disorder than other people. It is thought this could be due to depression associated with bipolar disorder, or it could also be due to the side effects of medications that are used to treat bipolar disorder. There is also a third theory – that people with bipolar disorder have reduced levels of serotonin, which can increase the appetite for carbohydrates and sweets.
- Getting plenty of **exercise** may also prove beneficial. It is well-known that exercise increases endorphins and endorphins promote feelings of well-being and better rest. According to *Medical News Today*, "More studies are needed to establish the appropriate intensity, frequency, and duration of exercise for people with the condition." Therefore, it is recommended to check with your physician before implementing any exercise routine.

The Bottom Line…

There are plenty of ways that you can naturally and safely manage your bipolar disorder, provided that you use these therapies as a complementary treatment to your prescribed medication regimen. Discuss any treatment with your physician first.