Enjoying Thanksgiving With Bipolar

by BRENDA VANTA

Top Tips for Thanksgiving With Bipolar

Some mood swings are normal during the holidays – it's that time when we tend to reflect more on our lives and relationships and preparing for parties or family get-togethers cause more stress.

If you suffer from bipolar, you're more likely to experience symptoms, unless you take some extra care of yourself. Consider the following tips:

Plan Ahead

Having a plan to organize what you have to do is important every day, but even more so leading up to events like Thanksgiving. Take some time to write down what do you have to do – shopping, cooking, making calls, preparing for the party, etc.

Give yourself extra time between tasks, just in case you need time to rest and relax. Without a schedule it's easy to feel overwhelmed, lose focus, and be unable to enjoy the holiday.

Avoid Splashing Out

Having a shopping list is essential. Stick to it and buy only what you need, not what's on sale. Stores will offer you great deals during the holidays to push their customers to buy more items: tempting discounts, or two-for-one specials.

Remember that during manic episodes you naturally have a tendency to spend more money. Avoid this by sticking to your shopping list and allotting a certain amount of cash for your shopping trip and leaving all other cash and cards at home.

Get Enough Sleep

Maintaining your regular sleep schedule may seem difficult, because you have additional things to deal with. However, you can better manage your time if you stick to your schedule. Don't skip hours of sleep to get prepared for Thanksgiving.

Rather, check your schedule, and focus only on the things that are really necessary. If you don't have time to go grocery shopping, order online and have your groceries delivered to your door.

Take Your Medication

Keep an eye on your bipolar medications, and be sure to take them as recommended. To make sure you don't

forget them, add them to your “to do” list. Have some extra pills in your purse or coat pocket just in case you stay late at a party, or end up away from home for any reason. If you feel unwell, see your doctor right away – he or she may have to adjust your prescription.

Eat Well

You already know to be cautious and avoid alcohol and coffee, but do you pay attention to what you eat? Dr. Pamela Peeke, a health expert, physician, scientist, and best-selling author has done extensive research about the impact of diet on bipolar. First of all, bipolar disorder (the disease itself and the medication) can lead to strong cravings for sugar, and refined sugar has been linked with mood changes.

Therefore, try to choose healthy sugars (from fruits or unsweetened juices) over doughnuts, cookies and pastry. Replace fried vegetables with a green salad with some nuts and seeds, since both green leafy vegetables and seeds are rich in magnesium, a mineral that has similar effects as the anti-manic drug lithium.

Fresh fruits and veggies are also a great source of vitamins B and C, and bipolar is linked with a deficiency in these nutrients. Don’t forget about omega 3 fatty acids found in healthy oils and fish, they have true anti-depressant qualities.

Happy Thanksgiving!