

MOOD STABILIZERS FOR BIPOLAR DISORDER (MANIC DEPRESSION)

Updated 1/07

Group Main Use	Medication Brand/Generic	Form	Dose Schedule	Dose Range	Most Common Side Effects for Group	Pros for Group	Cautions for Group
Mood stabilizers (Bipolar, booster)	Eskalith CR 450 Lithobid Lithonate Lithotab Lithium Carbonate Li2 Co3	Capsules Tablets 300mg 450mg	2 to 4 times a day	Blood level 0.6-1.2	Lithium: nausea, GI irritation, diarrhea, vomiting, lower thyroid function, may increase white blood cells, tremor, skin rashes. If dose too high side effects increase, may increase appetite.	Mood stabilizers are first choice for Bipolar Disorder (manic-depression). They are also used to boost the effects of antidepressants or help impulse control, violence. Lithium is the best studied and may also treat unipolar depression. Slow release versions more convenient.	Lithium has more nuisance side effects but not serious usually except overdose. Depakote may rarely seriously harm the liver or pancreas or decrease platelets (clotting) and Tegretol may rarely seriously lower blood counts. Thus depending on which med labs are usually important to check such as blood level of medicine, thyroid, liver, blood count.
	Depakote Valproic Acid Depakote ER	Tablets 125mg 250mg 500mg ER=Extended Release 250mg 500mg Sprinkles (capsules) 125mg	2 to 3 times a day	Blood level 50-125	Depakote: sedation (usually mild), may increase appetite, occasionally associated with mild to moderate hair loss. GI irritation. May increase energy.	Tegretol, Topamax, Neurontin, Lamictal, Depakote and Zonegran are also used for seizures. Depakote may best help rapid cycling and mixed mania/depression. It also helps prevent migraines.	Depakote and Lithium may increase weight somewhat. Interactions may be significant and varied with Tegretol.
	Tegretol Carbamazepine	Tablets 100mg (chewable) 200mg XR (extended release) 100mg, 200mg, 400mg suspension 100mg/5ml	2 to 3 times a day XR one or 2 times a day	Blood level 4-12	Tegretol: sedation, dizziness, nausea, double vision, unsteady gait if level high, usually mild insignificant drop in blood counts.	Tegretol XR, Carbatrol, and Equetro are all extended release forms of carbamazepine.	All should be avoided if pregnancy, if possible. Mood stabilizers offer little help for most anxiety unless as booster or part of Bipolar.
	Carbatrol	Capsules 200mg, 300mg	twice a day			Trileptal can be seen as a refined Tegretol without the many interactions or blood count risks. Thus, no regular blood tests.	
	Equetro	Capsules 100, 200, 300mg	twice a day				
	Trileptal oxcarbazepine	Scored tablets 150mg, 300mg, 600mg suspension 300mg/5ml	twice a day	600-2400mg/day no blood level	Similar to Tegretol without blood count risks and less interactions.		Hyponatremia (low sodium) risk is increased with Trileptal.

All these medications should be taken 7 days a week to be effective. Simultaneous use of alcohol or cigarettes and especially street drugs should be avoided. All antidepressants may increase mania risk in persons with Bipolar (manic-depressive) disorder. All medications should be avoided if possible in pregnancy. This chart is intended to be a summary guide, not a full and complete list.

MOOD STABILIZERS FOR BIPOLAR DISORDER (MANIC DEPRESSION) (Page 2)

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Group Main Use	Medication Brand/Generic	Form	Dose Schedule	Dose Range	Most Common Side Effects for Group	Pros for Group (Continued)	Cautions for Group (Continued)	
Mood stabilizers (Continued) (Bipolar, booster)	Neurontin (Gabapentin)	Capsules 100mg 300mg 400mg Tablets 600mg 800mg	2 to 3 times a day	800 to 2400mg No blood level Target 900 to 1800mg	Sedation (usually mild to moderate) dizzy, unsteady gait, fatigue.	Neurontin generic available. Neurontin, Topamax, and Lamictal are new and seem low in side effects, especially Neurontin which may also help sleep, anxiety, and pain. No lab tests needed. Lamictal and Lithium best treat Bipolar depressed phase.	Lamictal may cause a severe, dangerous rash, especially in youth. Avoid with Depakote and increase dose slowly. Topamax rarely causes eye pain, glaucoma, osteoporosis, heat intolerance, or kidney stones.	
	Lamictal (Lamotrigine)	Tablets 25mg 100mg 150mg 200mg	1 to 2 times a day	No blood level 100-600mg often 200-400 mg	Nausea, dizzy, unsteady gait, double or blurry vision, headache, sedation. Rash, sometimes severe.	All these may help migraines and some nerve pain. Topamax also may help decrease alcohol abuse.		
	Topamax (Topiramate)	Tablets: 25mg 100mg 200mg capsules (sprinkles): 15mg 25mg	2 times a day	Often 200-400mg No blood level	Sedation, dizzy, unsteady gait, slower or fuzzy thinking, nervousness	Topamax and Zonegran may cause weight loss.		
	Gabitril (tiagabine)	Tablets: 2, 4, 12, 16, 20mg	1 to 2 times a day (best with food)	No blood level 2 to 12 mg/d in psychiatry (higher for seizures - 36mg/d or more)	Dizziness, tremors, nervousness, decreased concentration (rare).	Relatively unique for its specific effect to increase reuptake of neurotransmitter GABA. May be better for anxiety than moods.		New, perhaps help anxiety, little help mood.
	Zonegran (Zonisamide)	Capsule 25, 50, 100 mg	1 or 2 times a day	100-600mg per day	Weight loss, agitation, anxiety, sedation, dizzy, ataxia, cognitive, rash, overheat (decrease of sweat), insomnia	Weight loss sometimes		So far little evidence as mood stabilizer. Cousin of sulfa antibiotics so avoid if allergic to sulfa, Bactrim, Septra. Rare kidney stones.

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