

## Realistic Dreams, Nightmares, Night Terrors during Bipolar Disorder

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### INTRODUCTION

Disturbed sleep is common in people suffering from bipolar disorder. Often people experience nightmares, night terrors, combined with either insomnia or too much sleep depends on whether person is experiences a manic or depressive episode.

#### Realistic Dreams and Nightmares

Nightmares are disturbing, well-remembered dreams that normally which invoke anxiety and fear. They typically arise later in the evening during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and cause a person to wake up abruptly. Researchers believe nightmares in those with bipolar disorder may predict upcoming mood swings.

#### Nightmares in Children

Children with bipolar disorder may experience nightmares. Dreams of huge violence, gore, and death as well as dreams that signal a fear of abandonment have been reported. Of course, most children experience nightmares on occasion. Children having bipolar disorder can experience nightmares more significantly.

#### Night Terrors

People with bipolar disorder also commonly face Night terrors. Disparate nightmares, night terrors do not occur during REM sleep.

A night terror isn't a dream, but rather sudden awakening along with the physical symptoms such as intense fear feeling, screaming or thrashing, and increased heart rate and blood pressure.

At the time of night terror, the person awakes in a terrified state and is totally confused and inconsolable at that moment. The person may or may not recall the episode in the morning.

These are generally very rare in adults, yet many who experience them have mental health issues such as bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety. At the time when a person experiences this night terror, they seem confused and do not recognize anyone; some even run from the

bedroom in an apparent attempt to avoid harm.

#### Lamictal and Dream Abnormalities

Lamictal (lamotrigine) is mainly a mood stabilizer which has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) prescribed as a treatment of bipolar disorder and certain seizure disorders. It has a capability to effectively prevent the recurrence/relapse of mood episodes in both bipolar I and bipolar II.

Although, some people who take Lamictal can experience a variety of sleep-related side effects, with the involvement of an increased nightmares and abnormal dreams. One should consult Doctor, if they think Lamictal is causing abnormal dreams.

#### Coping & Treatment

It is not yet clear what actually causes people with bipolar disorder to experience nightmares and night terrors. The noticeable thing as per the researchers due to sleep disturbances is the severity and promptness of symptoms during both manic and depressive episodes.

A full-fledged sleep is essential for managing bipolar disorder. If a person struggles with sleep disturbances such as nightmares or night terrors, experts recommend following:

##### 1. Bedtime

Make a fixed bedtime routine. Take a hot water bath, read a book, or listen to music for relaxing your body in order to set the mood for a sound night's sleep. Create an engaging routine which allows mind to focus on something instead of worries and anxiety.

##### 2. Avoid Sleep-Interfering Substances

Avoid substances which cause interference in sleep. Substances such as caffeine prevent from sleeping; while substances such as alcohol or marijuana can help fall asleep, but can affect the quality of your sleep. Avoid all for a more restful sleep.

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### 3. Exercise

Exercise regularly, as it helps to maintain good health. Late night exercise can significantly interfere with sleeping habits and enable to stay asleep, especially for one going through bipolar disorder. While on the other hand Morning exercise can help support healthy sleep.

### 4. Get Medical Help

Consult Doctor. If one is concerned about the frequency of your nightmares or night terrors. One would also like to ask doctor whether the prescribed medications cause sleep problems as a side effect, and whether an alternative option can be more suited.