

Borderline Personality Disorder

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Borderline personality disorder is a chronic (long-lasting) brain disease.

It can cause you to have bad thoughts about yourself, have trouble getting along with others, and cause problems in family and work life.

Borderline personality disorder mostly affects young women. There is a high rate of self-injury and suicide attempts.

Medicines and therapy can help control your symptoms and help you live a productive life.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include:

- less control over emotions such as anger, depression and anxiety
- unstable moods, relationships, self-image and behavior
- problems reaching long-term goals and career plans
- problems keeping lasting friendships and holding consistent personal values
- feeling misunderstood, bored or empty
- self-injury
- drug or alcohol abuse
- impulsive behaviors, such as aggression, binge shopping, binge eating and risky sex
- depression, anxiety disorders or bipolar disorder.

Borderline personality disorder can cause you to have intense and stormy relationships. Your feelings toward friends or family can suddenly change from love to intense anger.

You may have problems with separation because you are highly sensitive. Even a slight change in plans can trigger feelings of rejection and abandonment. You may often feel lost and worthless.

Causes

Borderline personality disorder has no single known cause. It may be caused by a family history or something in your environment.

Many people who have borderline personality disorder suffer some sort of abuse.

Adults who have borderline personality disorder are at a high risk of violence, including rape. This may be from harmful environments and poor judgment when choosing partners or lifestyles.

Diagnosis

Your health care provider will first rule out other illnesses or medical conditions. He or she may:

- take your medical history
- give you a physical exam
- take blood or other lab tests.

(over)

Treatments

- **Medicines.** Medicines can help reduce your symptoms. They can be prescribed for depression, mood swings or thinking distortions.
- **Talk therapy (group or personal).** Working with a mental health provider can help you explore your thoughts, feelings or relationships.
- **Dialectical behavior therapy (group and personal).** This is a form of talk therapy.

Together, you and your health care provider will decide which treatment options are best for you.

Treatment can help you work, enjoy friends and live a fulfilling life.

Like any other long-term disease such as diabetes or heart disease, borderline personality disorder needs ongoing treatment.

**Information adapted from
the National Institute
of Mental Health.**