



What Causes Mood Swings In Males And Females?

A mood swing is a sudden or intense change in emotional state. During a mood swing, a person may quickly switch from feeling happy and upbeat to feeling sad, irritable, or angry.

Common causes of mood swings

Often, lifestyle factors play a role in the onset of mood swings. People may have sudden changes in mood if they are:

- experiencing a significant life change, such as moving home or changing job
- feeling stressed or overwhelmed
- not getting enough sleep
- not eating healthily
- taking medications that impact mood or sleep

Regular and severe mood changes, however, can indicate an underlying condition. Some conditions that lead to mood swings can affect both males and females, while some affect females only.

Mood swings in males and females

Common mood-altering conditions that affect either sex include:

Bipolar disorder

Bipolar disorder is when someone experiences periods of extreme emotional highs (mania) and lows (depression). These highs and lows may occur rarely or several times each year.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, **4.4% of adults** in the United States will experience bipolar disorder at some point in their lives.

Major depressive disorder (MDD)

MDD affects more than **16.1 million** adults in the U.S. and is more common among women than men. People with MDD experience persistent feelings of sadness and a loss of interest in things they usually enjoy.

Depression affects a person's mood, everyday life, and relationships. Most people with depression experience several episodes of low mood during their lives. However, they may have periods of happiness and good mood in between.

Cyclothymia

Cyclothymia, or cyclothymic disorder, is when someone experiences emotional highs and lows. It is similar to bipolar disorder but is less severe and less frequent.

Persistent depressive disorder (PDD)

This form of depression was previously known as dysthymia. People with **PDD** experience long-term feelings of low mood that persist for at least **2 years**.

PDD symptoms are not as severe as those of MDD, but they can significantly impact a person's life and relationships. The condition affects approximately **1.5%** of adults in the U.S. each year.

Borderline personality disorder (BPD)

Someone with BPD can experience intense mood swings and self-image issues, and they can have difficulty managing their behavior. Those with **BPD** have an intense fear of abandonment and tend to have unstable relationships.

According to some studies, **5.9% of people** will experience BPD at some point in their lives.

Other mental health conditions

Other mental health disorders that can contribute to mood swings include:

- **Schizophrenia:** People with schizophrenia have hallucinations or delusions that cause them to experience an altered state of reality. Schizophrenia significantly impacts quality of life.
- **Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD):** Children and adults with ADHD can struggle to manage their emotions, leading to mood swings. Other symptoms include impulsiveness, hyperactivity, and difficulty paying attention.
- **Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD):** DMDD is a childhood condition where the person experiences intense moodiness, including anger, extreme irritability, and temper outbursts. These symptoms must persist for **12 months** or more for a diagnosis of DMDD.

Substance misuse or abuse

[Excessive use of alcohol or drugs](#) can affect mental health and lead to significant changes in mood.

Physical health conditions

Physical health conditions, especially chronic or terminal illness, can have a major effect on a person's mood. These changes can be direct (through alterations in hormones or brain function) or indirect (by triggering depression or anxiety).

Examples of physical ailments that can lead to mood swings include:

- [Alzheimer's disease](#)
- [coronary heart disease](#)
- [diabetes](#)
- [epilepsy](#)
- [HIV](#)
- [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#)
- [Parkinson's disease](#)
- [rheumatoid arthritis](#)
- [stroke](#)
- [thyroid disorders](#)

[Learn more about how MS can cause mood swings here.](#)

Causes of mood swings in females

Hormonal shifts can lead to significant changes in mood. Females tend to be more prone to symptoms of hormonal changes than males, particularly during menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause.

Common causes of mood swings in females include:

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)

PMS causes many symptoms just before the onset of a menstrual period. These include:

- mood swings
- bloating
- breast tenderness
- depression
- fatigue
- food cravings

More than 90% of women report experiencing some PMS symptoms.

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)

PMDD is a more severe form of PMS. It affects up to 5% of women of childbearing age. It often co-occurs with depression or anxiety.

Symptoms include extreme changes in mood, persistent irritability or anger, and depression or anxiety. It also causes physical symptoms that are similar to those of PMS.

Mood swings in pregnancy

Hormonal changes in pregnancy can cause sudden shifts in mood, as well as feelings of anxiety and vulnerability. Physical changes may also influence a woman's emotions.

These mood changes may be more apparent during the first trimester and level off once the body has adapted to fluctuating hormone levels. However, some women will experience mood swings throughout their pregnancy.

Menopause

Menopause is a natural life transition where a person's menstrual cycles end. It typically happens to women in North America between the ages of 40 and 58, but the average age is 51.

According to the North American Menopause Society, up to 23% of women experience mood changes during or after menopause. Other symptoms include hot flashes, sleep problems, and loss of libido.

Treatment

Treatment is not typically necessary for occasional mood swings that are mild to moderate and do not impact a person's quality of life.

However, if severe or persistent mood swings occur, they can indicate an underlying condition that may benefit from treatment. The treatment will depend on the underlying cause. Options include:

Psychotherapy

If mood swings result from a mental health condition, therapy may help, especially if changes in mood impact everyday life or relationships. Therapy can help people:

- better manage their emotions
- work on issues that contribute to mood swings
- understand the link between thoughts, feelings, and behavior
- learn more helpful coping skills
- improve communication skills, which can benefit relationships

Therapy can also help those with a chronic or terminal physical illness deal with their situation and better manage their emotions.

Medication

A doctor may prescribe medication to treat the symptoms of mental health conditions, such as depression or schizophrenia, which can contribute to mood swings. These options include:

- [antianxiety medications](#)
- [antidepressants](#)
- antipsychotic drugs
- [sleep aids](#)

Treating physical conditions, such as a [thyroid disorder](#), with medication may also reduce mood swings.

Lifestyle changes

Lifestyle changes, whether alone or in combination with other treatments, can improve mood. People may see benefits from doing one or more of the following:

- creating a sleep schedule and aiming for 7-9 hours' sleep every night
- eating a healthful diet and having meals at regular times
- engaging in regular physical activity
- managing stress through meditation, mindfulness, yoga, or other sessions
- keeping a journal to track changes in mood and potential triggers for those changes
- maintaining an active social life and connecting with family and friends regularly

When to see a doctor

Individuals should see their doctor if their mood swings are:

- regular
- intense
- persistent (lasting for more than a few days)
- affecting their work, relationships, or other aspects of their life
- causing them to engage in risky behaviors
- causing them to have thoughts of self-harm or suicide

Outlook

In most cases, a person's emotions will level out within a few hours or days. If mood swings occur as the result of an underlying mental or physical health issue, then treating the condition can help people manage their emotions.

Mental health disorders typically respond to psychotherapy, medication, lifestyle changes, or a combination of all three. Sometimes, it may take time to find the best treatment plan to alleviate symptoms.

Prevention

Many of the techniques that help people manage their mood can also help prevent mood swings. These include:

- creating and sticking to a daily routine
- enjoying a healthful diet
- getting enough sleep
- exercising regularly
- finding ways to manage stress and eliminate its sources where possible
- keeping a mood journal
- socializing with others, including family and friends
- reaching out and talking to someone in times of stress or crisis
- seeking treatment if symptoms of mental health issues arise
- following a treatment plan following a diagnosis of a mental health disorder

Summary

Occasional mild-to-moderate mood swings are a normal part of life. They may be more common during certain times, for instance, when significant life changes take place, or hormonal fluctuations occur due to [menstruation](#) and pregnancy.

Intense, long lasting, or recurring mood swings can suggest an underlying issue. In these cases, it is best to see a healthcare provider. A doctor or mental health professional may diagnose these conditions and recommend a course of treatment.

With treatment, most people with mental health issues can learn to manage their emotions and improve their quality of life.