

I Lithium

What is Lithium?

Lithium is a mineral with anti-depressant and anti-manic effects. It is used to treat Bipolar Affective Disorder (manic-depression) and severe depression. Lithium is a natural substance. It occurs naturally in food and water, and therefore small amounts can be found in the body. Certain minerals, however, have a high Lithium content and it is from this source that the medication Lithium Carbonate is made. When prescribed by a doctor, the medication can be termed simply Lithium Carbonate. However, most manufacturers sell the medicine under a trade name. In the United Kingdom a common trade name for Lithium Carbonate is Priadel.

How does Lithium work?

Manic Depression is thought to be caused by chemical imbalances in certain brain cells responsible for emotions and behaviour. Lithium acts to correct these imbalances and therefore stabilise sufferers' moods. In doing so, Lithium causes little, if any, interference with mental or physical capacity and sufferers continue to have normal emotional reactions. For this reason, it is often better tolerated by the body than other medications used to treat manic depression.

Precautions:

Lithium medication requires regular blood tests to monitor the therapeutic level and prevent toxicity. Patients on lithium therapy should drink plenty of water to enable the body to excrete excess waste products. However, with all of these cautions, carefully prescribed dosages and regular monitoring of patients taking it, lithium is one of the safest medications, one that has revolutionised the treatment of mood disorders.

Bob Houlston says:

"I believe that my bipolar affective disorder is predominantly a genetic issue. My lithium medication appears to enhance the functioning of my brain so it is a good thing that I take it. After all, why should I settle for what I was born with?"

Source:

This leaflet and more information is available from my web site Mental Health Survival Guide - Helping to break the link between disability and poverty.
www.houlston.freeserve.co.uk/mental.htm

Best wishes from Bob Houlston