

Lithium is not only important for batteries, but has also been playing an important role in psychiatric medicine, specifically in the treatment of bipolar disorders (formerly known as cyclothymia). Usually, Lithium is administered as a lithium salt, e.g. lithium carbonate, primarily for recurrent depression (known as unipolar recurrent depression) or for alternating depression and mania (bipolar affective disorder). Lithium carbonate is intended to prevent as far as possible further depressive or manic phases. Treatment is carried out with so-called retard medications, which release their active ingredient slowly or with a delay in order to prevent high concentrations of lithium in the blood. Overdoses may cause a variety of side effects, particularly affecting the nervous system, including disturbances in alertness and consciousness, restlessness, muscle twitching and tremor.