

# PANIC DISORDER

## WHAT IS PANIC DISORDER (PANIC ATTACKS)?

A person with panic disorder usually experiences recurring episodes of panic attacks. Panic attacks are episodes of intense fear and worry that something bad is going to happen. These panic attacks can happen anytime or “out of the blue” even when there are no real triggers or causes. Panic attacks usually last from a few minutes to an hour.



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A PANIC ATTACK

Four or more of the following symptoms occur during a panic attack:



Increased heart rate



Chest pain



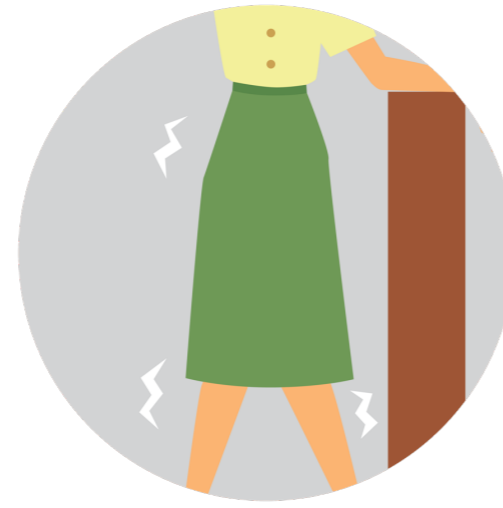
Chills



Dizziness



Fear of dying or losing control



Numbness or tingling sensation



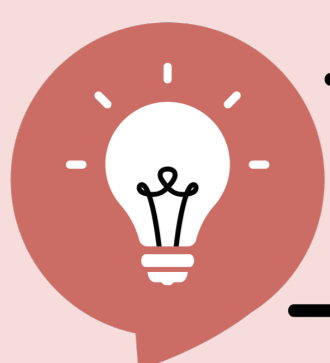
Nausea or upset stomach



Trembling

### Other symptoms include:

- Feeling of “impending doom” or as if one is having a heart attack when they are actually not
- Feeling of being choked
- Feelings of detachment or unreality
- Palpitations or a sensation that the heart is pounding very intensely
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating



### Did You Know?

People with panic attacks may avoid locations where they previously experienced symptoms, even without specific triggers. This avoidance can significantly disrupt their daily lives.



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## WHO ARE AT RISK OF PANIC DISORDER?

Panic disorder is more common in women, with twice the likelihood compared to men. Typically, it begins in people in their twenties. It can also run in families, and sometimes the first panic attack is triggered by a stressful event. However, for some individuals, the panic attacks continue even after the stressful situation has passed.



Genetics/  
Family History

## MANAGEMENT OF PANIC DISORDER

The two main treatment options are **talking treatment (therapy)** and **medication**.



### COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (CBT)

Talking treatments such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) are effective for panic disorders. It helps patients recognise and monitor their symptoms and teaches them relaxation techniques to manage anxiety. Additionally, patients learn to change their thinking about their symptoms and develop more helpful thoughts.

## MEDICATIONS

In addition to CBT, medications can also be prescribed to treat panic disorder. The most commonly used medication is called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI). Sometimes, sedative medications like benzodiazepines are added for short-term use, but it is important to note that they can be addictive and lose their effectiveness if taken for more than a few weeks.



With the right treatment, many patients can fully recover and resume their normal daily activities.

If you think you are experiencing these symptoms, it is best to seek help from a mental health professional. They can guide you in finding the right treatment that best suits your needs.



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