

Panic Disorder

What Is Panic Disorder?

Panic disorder is characterized by repeated and unexpected panic attacks followed by a period of constant worry about when the next attack will occur. These panic attacks may include a feeling of intense, overwhelming terror that can occur suddenly and without warning.

Every so often, people experience anxiety when faced with moments of real danger or stress. But for people with panic disorder, the symptoms of anxiety are much worse, and they can come from nowhere. Their panic attack can strike at any time, often causing them to live in constant fear of their next attack. As a result, many end up hiding from life instead of living it.

Panic disorder affects about 2.4 million American adults. The good news is that with therapy, you can begin to feel better.

The key symptoms of panic disorder include:

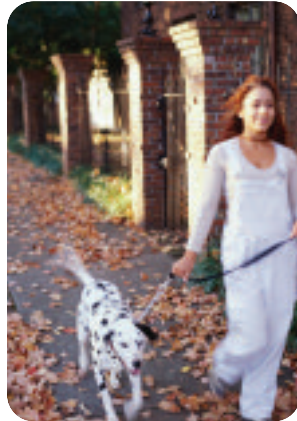
- Repeated and unexpected panic attacks, followed by 1 month of constant worry about the next attack
- Fear of being in places where escape would be difficult
- Fear of traveling without a companion
- Feeling that your anxiety symptoms interfere with your daily life

During these attacks, symptoms can include:

- Physical symptoms such as palpitations, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, a choking sensation, or dizziness
- Fear of losing control or “going crazy”
- Fear of dying
- Feeling detached

Tips for Feeling Better

- Talk to your health care provider. Remember that panic disorder is treatable. A combination of therapy, lifestyle changes, and medicine is often effective in treating panic attacks.
- Remember that most panic attacks **only last a few minutes** before the symptoms subside.



Take an active role in your overall health:

- Learn more about your illness, personal triggers, and coping strategies.
- Exercise regularly and eat healthy foods.
- Share your feelings by talking with friends and family.
- Partner with your doctor to help maximize treatment success.

You may also find helpful information at these links:

National Alliance on Mental Illness

www.nami.org

Mental Health America

www.mentalhealthamerica.net

Anxiety Disorders Association of America

www.adaa.org

Notes:

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