

Panic attacks

Panic attacks are a type of fear response. They are an exaggeration of your body's normal response to danger, stress or excitement. During a panic attack, physical symptoms can build up very quickly, including:

- a pounding or racing heartbeat
- feeling faint, dizzy or light-headed
- feeling very hot or very cold
- sweating, trembling or shaking
- nausea (feeling sick)
- pain in your chest or abdomen
- struggling to breathe or feeling like you're choking
- feeling like your legs are shaky or are turning to jelly
- feeling disconnected from your mind, body or surroundings

It's easy to mistake these for the signs of a heart attack or another serious medical problem. You might feel very afraid that you're losing control that you're going to faint or even going to die.

If you're having lots of panic attacks at unpredictable times and there doesn't seem to be a particular trigger or cause, you might be given a diagnosis of panic disorder. It's common to experience panic disorder and certain types of phobia together. People who experience panic disorder may have some periods with few or no panic attacks, but have lots at other times.

Resources:

What are panic attacks?

Panic Self-Assessment

Panic attacks

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/my-feelings/panic-attacks>

How to deal with panic attacks

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/anxiety-and-panic/how-to-deal-with-panic-attacks>

5 Top tips for coping with a panic attack

<https://www.priorygroup.com/blog/5-top-tips-for-coping-with-panic-attacks>