

## Educational Links (English):

- ❖ <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/anxiety.panicandphobias.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/anxiety.panicandphobias/anxietyphobiaskeyfacts.aspx>
- ❖ <https://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/panic-disorder-agoraphobia>
- ❖ <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/publications/panic-disorder-when-fear-overwhelms/index.shtml>
- ❖ <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000924.htm>

*Lumos Psychiatric Services*



## Educational Booklet: Panic Disorder

Fear and anxiety are part of life. A person may feel anxious before taking an exam or walking down a dark street. This type of anxiety is useful because it allows us to be more alert or more careful. It usually ends shortly after it comes out of the situation that caused it.

However, for many people anxiety does not go away and worsens over time thus developing anxiety disorders.

Unlike relatively mild and transient anxiety caused by a stressful event, anxiety disorders last at least six months and can get worse if left untreated.

### Different anxiety disorders include:

- ❖ Panic disorder
- ❖ Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- ❖ Post-traumatic stress disorder
- ❖ Social Phobia (Social Anxiety Disorder)
- ❖ Specific phobias
- ❖ Generalized anxiety disorder

### Panic Disorder:

Panic disorder sufferers experience feelings of terror that come to them suddenly and repeatedly without warning. They can't predict when or where an attack will occur, and between episodes, many people worry intensely and are terrified of thinking they might have another attack. Usually, a panic attack reaches its maximum intensity during the first ten minutes.



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## Symptoms of a panic attack:

- ❖ Palpitations
- ❖ Chest pains
- ❖ Dizziness or dizziness
- ❖ Nausea or stomach problems
- ❖ Suffocations or chills
- ❖ Lack of air or feeling suffocated
- ❖ Tingling or numbness
- ❖ Tremors
- ❖ Feeling unreality
- ❖ Terror
- ❖ Feeling uncontrolled or going crazy
- ❖ Fear of dying

## Studies indicate that...

- ❖ Panic disorder is more common in women than in men.
- ❖ Panic attacks usually begin in late adolescence or early adulthood.
- ❖ Not everyone with panic attacks will develop panic disorder. A lot of people only have one seizure and never have another one again.
- ❖ The tendency to develop panic attacks appears to be hereditary.

## What is agoraphobia?

It's the fear of open spaces. In these cases, people's lives are so restricted that they end up avoiding normal activities, such as shopping or driving a car. About a third of these people are limited to living in their homes or can only face a feared situation if they are accompanied by a trusted person.

## Problems associated with panic disorder:

Panic disorder is often accompanied by other problems, such as depression, drug abuse, or alcoholism. These diseases need to be treated separately.

## Panic Disorder Treatment:

Panic disorder is one of the most treatable anxiety disorders. It can be treated with medications or cognitive behavioral psychological therapy. The best results are obtained with a combination treatment.

- ❖ **Medications** - The most commonly used medicines are anxiolytics and antidepressants. These should be prescribed, carefully administered and gradually removed by a doctor.
- ❖ **Psychotherapy** - Psychological therapies are focused on learning to deal with fears and phobias, redefining the patient's relationship with fears, overcoming the strong avoidance of dreaded situations, avoiding excessive support in people and overcoming desperate attempt to control the escalation of fear.

## Remember:

- ❖ If you think you have an anxiety disorder, the first person you should consult is your doctor. A doctor will be able to determine whether the symptoms that alarm you are due to an anxiety disorder, another medical condition, or both.
- ❖ If an anxiety disorder is diagnosed, the next step is usually to consult a mental health professional.
- ❖ Once you start medicines, it is important not to abruptly discontinue them. Certain medications should be reduced gradually under the supervision of a doctor or negative reactions may occur.
- ❖ Many people with anxiety disorders benefit from joining a self-help or support group and sharing their problems and accomplishments with others.
- ❖ Stress management and meditation techniques can help you calm down and can improve the effects of therapy.
- ❖ Aerobic exercises can have a calming effect.
- ❖ Caffeine, illegal drugs, and even some unprescribed cold medications should be avoided as they can aggravate symptoms of anxiety disorders.
- ❖ Your family or friends can be a great source of support.

**For questions or concerns, discuss it with your doctor.**