

## Does this sound like you?

- I have chest pains or a racing heart
- I have a hard time breathing or feel like I'm choking
- I feel dizzy, or I sweat a lot
- I have stomach problems or I feel like I need to throw up
- I shake, tremble, or tingle
- I feel unreal
- I am afraid I am dying or going crazy

If you experience some of these concerns, you may have panic disorder.

Panic disorder is a real illness that needs to be treated.

## What is panic disorder?

Panic disorder is a real illness. It can be treated with medication and therapy.

If you have panic disorder, you feel suddenly terrified for no reason. These frequent bursts of terror are called panic attacks. You may have scary physical feelings like a fast heartbeat, trouble breathing, or dizziness.

Panic attacks can happen at any time and any place without warning. You may live in fear of another attack and may stay away from places where you have had an attack.

## When does panic disorder start and how long does it last?

Panic disorder usually starts in young adulthood, around 18 to 24 years old. It sometimes starts when a person is already under a lot of stress.

Anyone can have panic disorder, but more women than men have the illness. It can run in families, and it can last for a few months or for many years.

## Am I the only person with this illness?

No. You are not alone. In any year, at least 2.4 million Americans have panic disorder.

## What can I do to help myself?

Talk to a counselor or a doctor about your fear and panic attacks. Tell them if the panic attacks keep you from doing everyday things and living your life.

## What can a doctor or counselor do to help me?

Talking to a counselor helps many people with panic disorder. Therapy can teach you ways to feel less afraid and anxious. A doctor may give you medication. Medication usually helps people with panic disorder feel better after a few weeks.