

Natural Help 4...

Panic Disorder



What is Panic Disorder?

Panic Disorder is a type of anxiety disorder characterized by the experience of **at least three panic attacks in a three week period** under circumstances not involving physical exertion or life threatening events.

Many people experience an occasional panic attack related to life stress and anxiety and this does not necessarily mean that you have a diagnosable **Panic Disorder**. However, if the panic attacks become more frequent, as indicated above, then the psychiatric diagnosis would apply.

The body has a natural *flight or fight* response to danger. When faced with a life threatening situation, one may either stay put and face the danger (fight), or run away from the danger (flight). However, in many situations in which panic attacks occur, there is no danger or **the fear is disproportional to the threat**.

What distinguishes the occasional panic attack from **Panic Disorder** is the frequency of the attacks as well as a persistent fear or worry about experiencing another one.

Diagnosing Panic Disorder

The most common age of onset for **Panic Disorder** is between the late teens and early adulthood. However, **panic attacks don't discriminate** and the disorder can develop at any time and for a variety of reasons. The important thing to remember is that although there are **no cures for panic disorders**, properly managed, you can reclaim your life and restore your inner balance.

The first step would be to seek a professional diagnosis from your health care professional or psychologist.

A detailed history of your symptoms will be taken in the consultation. You will be asked when the symptoms started, how they manifest themselves and when and where they occur during your daily routine.

Your feelings towards the panic attacks will also be explored, as well as the degree to which they may be affecting your life. Once a diagnosis is made, it is a good idea to research all possible treatment options in order to decide which ones would best suit you!

Symptoms of a Panic Attack

A panic attack is usually experienced as an intense feeling of fear. During a panic

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

attack a variety of physical symptoms may occur. These include:

- A pounding heart and increased pulse
- Excessive sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Feeling of choking
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness or feeling like you're going to faint
- Feelings of unreality or detachment
- Feeling of losing control or going "mad"
- Chills or hot flushes
- Fear of dying

Because of these intense and frightening feelings, many people experiencing panic attacks are seen in Emergency Hospital Rooms with suspected heart attacks.

However, panic attacks are not known to affect the heart or precipitate a heart attack.

What Causes Panic Disorder?

There is no single theory that adequately explains the cause of Panic Disorder. However, a combination of genetic, physical and psychological factors are thought to work together to predispose the individual to the development of [Panic Disorder](#) – usually under conditions of stress or after a traumatic event.

Genetics – Studies have shown that [Panic Disorder](#), like other anxiety disorders, often runs in families. Current research suggests that a genetic tendency to anxiety might increase your chances of suffering from [Panic Disorder](#).

Physical – Some people are more sensitive to their body's reactions to fear, such as heart rate, breathing and sweating. As a result, they are more inclined to a physical response to feelings of anxiety and fear.

Psychological - In some cases the physical symptoms of fear become the main focus to the person suffering from the anxiety. Every change in their heart rate or breathing (even if it is due to exercise) can cause them to become anxious about having a panic attack. Without realizing it, they become their own worst enemy.

Help for Panic Disorder

There are a number of options for [treating Panic Disorders](#) and it is important to **explore which option or combination works best** for you.

As with many psychiatric disorders, [treating Panic Disorders](#) usually involves a combination of treatment modalities, tailored to suit individual circumstances and characteristics.

Treatment Options for Panic Disorder

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CTB)



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

This form of therapy is practiced by psychologists and has been very successful in **[treating Panic Disorders](#)**. By investigating and recognizing the thoughts and situations that ‘trigger’ the panic attacks, strategies and coping mechanisms can be put into practice – at your own pace. The therapist will provide you with ‘life tools’ and behavioral techniques to help you manage the panic attacks and ultimately address the source of the disorder.

Relaxation Techniques

Meditation, yoga and deep breathing are some techniques that can be used to help control anxiety and lessen the stress that might be triggering the attacks.

Drug Therapy

Conventional medications for [Panic Disorder](#) include: Monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs); Tricyclic Antidepressants and Benzodiazapines. While prescription medication can be effective as part of a broader treatment plan, it is not always a necessary part of treatment. While on these medications you should be closely monitored as side effects are not uncommon and they have a well known potential for addiction.

Inappropriate and indiscriminate usage of these drugs can cause distressing side effects and it is therefore strongly advised that you research these drugs thoroughly and make an informed decision.

Herbal and Homeopathic Treatments

There are a number of herbal and homeopathic ingredients which may be of assistance, **without the negative side effects of prescription drugs**.

A holistic approach that addresses not only the symptoms of the panic attacks and anxiety, but the root cause and underlying imbalances, can help **provide all-round support and natural health**.

Remember that we are more than just the sum of our symptoms! Discuss this option with your doctor or consult a homeopath or naturopath for advice.

Other Disorders Related to Panic Disorders

It is important to get a proper diagnosis as panic attacks can also occur in other disorders or conditions such as:

- Phobias
- Social anxiety
- Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Post-traumatic-stress disorder (PTSD)
- Depression
- Hyperthyroidism
- Mitral Valve Prolapse
- Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushings Disease)
- Drug withdrawal
- Side effects of prescription drugs

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- Caffeine overdose

Tips for Coping with Panic Disorder

Though there are no magic **cures for [panic disorders](#)**, there are many things that can help you cope with **[panic disorder symptoms](#)**. Even if you know what triggers your panic attacks, try not to avoid the situation completely. Oftentimes we fear the unknown and, by running away, the ‘trigger’ itself can become larger than life and all-consuming.

Try to remember that you are not expected to rid yourself of panic attacks overnight. While it’s very easy for onlookers to simply say “Don’t panic, just relax and it will pass,” for the person suffering with a panic attack, it is extremely hard to imagine the attack being over. Taking small ‘steps’ (that you feel you can cope with) and very gradually increasing the demands on yourself can help facilitate a smooth transition back to a panic-free life.

If you are experiencing stress – whether in your relationships or at work, try and work on ways to improve the stressful circumstances – stress is a major precipitant of **[Panic Disorder](#)**. Take steps to change things that can be changed and learn stress management techniques.

Make sure that you eat regular wholesome meals, have sufficient sleep and also exercise regularly – all important in the management of **[Panic Disorder](#)**.

Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and CNS depressants, especially alcohol.

While having a panic attack:

- Try not to let your mind get the better of you by running away with negative thoughts of death, disaster or fainting. Try to focus on the thought that the “this too shall pass.” Try saying this out loud – remember if you can talk, it means you are still breathing!
- Slow down your breathing by closing your eyes, taking deep breaths and blowing each breath out through pursed lips. By keeping your hand on your stomach you will become more aware of your breathing.
- Don’t concentrate too hard on the symptoms as this will only increase your anxiety. Try to simply ‘let go’ of the need to stop the attack and rather try to ride it out - getting yourself ‘through’ the worst of it until it passes.
- Keep in mind there is no actual danger in having a panic attack. Reassure yourself that the fear of harm is only sustaining the attack and allowing it to last longer than necessary!

Determining the Seriousness of Panic Disorder

It is a good idea to seek help if you experience any symptoms of a panic attack. As many of these **[panic disorder symptoms](#)** can mimic an underlying medical condition it is important that your health care professional rules out these possibilities. If you are concerned that you may have Panic Disorder, it is best not to try and diagnose yourself.

Though there are no **cures for [panic disorder](#)** the condition is treatable and



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even though it may seem like the end of the world, help is available! Left untreated, the long term consequences of [Panic Disorder](#) can be very distressing. If the disorder is preventing you from functioning properly in your daily life, you need to get help.

There is a solution, help is available – there is no reason to live in fear!

What are the possible long term effects of [Panic Disorder](#)?

[Panic Disorder](#), if left untreated, may lead to:

- **Drug and alcohol abuse** - A person may self-medicate by abusing a substance in order to ‘escape’ the fear and provide relief.
- **Isolation** - People with [Panic Disorder](#) tend to avoid activities and places, often things that they once enjoyed, and remain as close to home and the familiar as possible.
- **Dependency** - Intense fear can cause sufferers of Panic Disorder to become increasingly financially and emotionally dependent on others.

Depression - [Panic Disorder symptoms](#) can have a devastating effect on the ability to function and to fulfill one’s roles in life. This loss of control and ability can easily lead to depression.

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the

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term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

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MindSoothe™ : Promote balanced mood and feelings of wellbeing.

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PureCalm™ : Aids nervous system in stress resistance for balanced moods and feelings of well being.

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PureCalm can be used to safely maintain harmony, health and systemic balance in the brain and nervous system, without harmful side effects and without sedatives. This remedy contains a selection of herbs known for their supportive function in maintaining brain.

PureCalm can especially benefit those individuals needing support overcoming worry, managing stress and to promote inner calm related to certain situations. Natural stress relief products such as PureCalm can be used consistently, without side effects or compromising health.

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Mood Tonic™ : Optimizes nervous system health and promotes balanced mood and peacefulness.

There are many options for supporting balanced mood naturally. Nature provides us with many natural mood tonics. Triple Complex Mood Tonic is a 100% natural combination of three cellular-supporting biochemic tissue salts especially selected for their positive effects on brain structures, brain chemistry, and nervous system health.

This combination of tissue salts can be used regularly in a general capacity to promote systemic and chemical balance in the brain and nervous system, as well as

in conjunction with other remedies to maintain therapeutic effectiveness.

[Learn more about Mood Tonic](#)

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The Calm Within CD is composed by our Clinical Psychologist to promote good physical and emotional health using a specially developed therapeutic sound techniques and [soothing music](#).

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