

Panic Attacks - Hopohopo

You are not alone! They are common and at least 1 in 10 people experience occasional panic attacks.

- May happen each time you are in a certain situation for no apparent reason but are usually triggered by a stressful event
- Are an experience of sudden and intense anxiety
- Are caused by a surge of adrenaline
- Are scary and feel awful
- Are not life threatening
- May feel like you are about to die, collapse or lose control of your mind – you are not!
- Can leave you feeling exhausted for some time afterwards

It is temporary. It will pass.

- Symptoms normally peak within 10 minutes. Most episodes (attacks) will last for between 5 and 30 minutes
- They can occur when you are sleeping, which makes you wake up feeling very frightened
- They occur on their own or link in with phobias

Causes

- Life events: usually triggered by a stressful event, however there may be no known reason
- Biological causes: panic attacks may result from a change in the balance of chemicals in the brain



Physical symptoms include:

- Shaking
- Feeling confused or disorientated
- Feeling nauseous
- Rapid heartbeats / difficulty breathing
- Chest pains
- Dizziness
- Sweating
- Dry mouth

When it starts:

- Concentrate on breathing and knowing these feelings will pass
- Drop your shoulders
- Place your hand on your stomach and take a big, slow breath out until it expands. Focus on your breathing

Tell people you trust about your experience so they know you might have to 'wait out' a panic attack.

Treatment options

- With treatment you can effectively control panic attacks
- Sometimes just understanding the reasons for your symptoms may help get rid of them. Books on Prescription is one of a range of self-help resources → [Self-help Card](#)
- Learn relaxation, breathing techniques or meditation → [Meditation and Mindfulness Card](#)
- Speak to your GP
- Talking therapies can help you learn about your worrying thoughts and beliefs and ways to manage them → [Talking Therapies Card](#)
- Medication may be prescribed in conjunction with other strategies → [Common Medications Card](#)

