

# Panic Attacks

## Behavioral Health Tips

Panic attacks affect everyone, young and old, males and females. In general, they are defined as time-limited episodes during which your body has an exaggerated response to stress or fear. Sometimes the stress or fear is known and sometimes it isn't. Those who experience panic attacks describe feeling a variety of "fight or flight" symptoms, including fast heartbeat, nausea, chest pain, shortness of breath, sweating, and limb weakness, among other symptoms. Panic disorder is defined as a persistent anxiety resulting from fear of having additional panic attacks. While many people have panic attacks, not all develop panic disorder. People with panic disorder at times have excessive fears of having a panic attack in a public place and a fear of leaving their house (agoraphobia).

### Warning Signs:

Common symptoms reported by individuals who experience panic attacks include fast heartbeat, nausea, chest pain, shortness of breath, sweating, dizziness, limb weakness and tingling. While experiencing these symptoms, many people worry that they are actively dying, having a heart attack, or losing control. They have an "impending sense of doom". These attacks can happen randomly, or can be triggered by specific places or situations. They typically last less than 30 minutes. Parents whose children and adolescents are experiencing these symptoms should not attempt to diagnose panic attacks on their own. Common panic attack symptoms can be caused by many other things, including serious health issues. Health professionals need to rule these serious issues out before a presumptive diagnosis of a panic attack or panic disorder can be made.

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## For more information

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### Cohen Children's Medical Center

Pediatric Behavioral Health- Rockville Centre  
100 Merrick Road  
Rockville Centre, NY 11570

**516-927-1630**

Pediatric Behavioral Health- Mineola  
156 First Street  
Mineola, NY 11501

**516-321-5770**

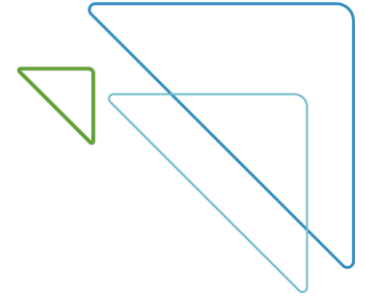
### How Parents Can Help:

Panic attacks are treatable, and parents can help their child and adolescents get the care they need. Parents can encourage their child to speak with them when they are feeling anxious or stressed. Parents can encourage simple conscious breathing exercises, listening to music or other activities that help their child self sooth. Parents can also help distract their child from the things that make them anxious. Parents should also encourage healthy sleep routines and diets free of caffeine or other stimulants. Mental health professionals can help children and adolescents by learning about how to manage their panic attacks and how to re-shape their thinking that leads to them. Common treatments include cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure therapy and mentalization techniques. Mental health providers can also prescribe short-term and intermediate-term medications to help.

### Treatments:



# Pediatric Behavioral Health



Patients will often get medications, therapy or both. Medications include anti-anxiety medications and medications commonly used to treat child and adolescent anxiety and depression. Medications for panic attacks are well-studied, very effective and have mostly mild side effects. Therapy includes a specific type of therapy known as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) that is specifically tailored to change how one thinks about panic attacks and their various triggers.

## Additional Information:

- 1) [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Resource\\_Centers/Anxiety\\_Disorder\\_Resource\\_Center/Home.aspx](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Anxiety_Disorder_Resource_Center/Home.aspx)
- 2) <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/panic-disorder-when-fear-overwhelms/index.shtml#pub1>
- 3) <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Anxiety-Disorders/Overview>
- 4) [https://www.copingcatparents.com/Child\\_Anxiety\\_Tales](https://www.copingcatparents.com/Child_Anxiety_Tales)
- 5) <http://www.worrywisekids.org/>
- 6) <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/mental-health/mental-health-disorders/anxiety-and-anxiety-disorders-in-children-information-for-parents>

## Books:

1. Mastery of Your Anxiety and Worry: Workbook (Treatments That Work) by MG Craske, DH. Barlow
2. The panic workbook for teens by Debra Kissen
3. Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous and Independent Children By Reid Wilson & Lynn Lyons
4. Why Smart Kids Worry: And What Parents Can Do to Help By Allison Edwards

## Apps:

1. Calm
2. Headspace
3. HelloMind
4. The Worry Box
5. Breathe 2 relax