

Panic Disorder (with or without Agoraphobia)

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This condition is often missed or misdiagnosed. It can lead to social isolation or phobias. A panic episode occurs in a brief time period, in which one is faced with intense fear or discomfort, coming from a combination of the following symptoms:

- Heart palpitation
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Sensations of shortness of breath or smothering
- Feelings of choking
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or abdominal distress
- Feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded, or faint
- Feelings of unreality or being detached of oneself
- Fear of losing control or going crazy
- Fear of dying
- Numbness or tingling sensations
- Chills or hot flushes

The diagnosis requires the presence of fear or discomfort and at least four of the above symptoms. If the person is also experiencing Agoraphobia, feeling that you are in a situation from which you cannot escape or in which you fear having an embarrassing panic attack, the fears involve situations such as the following:

- Being outside the home
- Being in a crowd or standing in a line
- Being on a bridge
- Traveling in a bus, train, or automobile

A person who is prone to a Panic Disorder with Agoraphobia avoids these situations or else endures them with marked distress, or they require the presence of a trusted companion.