

# What is a Panic attack?

We all get worried and stressed sometimes. But a panic attack is different. Panic attacks happen suddenly to some people when fear gets really strong and takes them over. These are short (they usually only last a few minutes) but they are really scary for the person having them.

**“If this fear means you have to change your life a lot (e.g. move out of your house, or never leave the house), it might be a good idea to get help”**

**Panic attacks happen when someone feels a few of these things at the same time:**

- Heart pounding or beating faster
- Sweating
- Feeling really cold or hot suddenly
- Feeling like you’re choking or out of breath
- Feeling numb
- Feeling ‘out of it’ – like you’re not in your body
- Chest pain
- Nausea, vomiting or stomach ache
- Thinking you are dying
- Worrying about losing control or going crazy

If there is something (like spiders, or crowds) that gives you panic attacks, you might feel like staying away from that thing. That makes sense! But if this fear means you have to change your life a lot (e.g. move out of your house, or never leave the house), it might be a good idea to get help.

If you think you are having panic attacks, talk to a trusted adult, doctor, psychologist or counsellor. There is help out there! Learn more about worried and scared feelings in our article: <https://bwisehealth.com/article/do-you-worry-all-the-time-you-could-be-anxious>