



## How to know you're affected by panic attacks:

- ◆ Do you experience intense periods of fear that begin quickly and are accompanied by uncomfortable physical symptoms: racing heart, nausea, dizziness?
- ◆ Do these periods of fear occur “out of the blue?”
- ◆ Do you anticipate these attacks, wondering when the next one will strike?
- ◆ Do you worry about possible consequences of these attacks: fainting, dying, losing control?
- ◆ Do you fear or avoid situations where these attacks often occur; are there precautions taken to protect yourself from experiencing these attacks?
- ◆ Does the fear of a potential attack interfere with your everyday life?

**1 out of every 75 people worldwide will experience panic attacks at one time in their lives.**



# What are panic attacks?

an unexpected and severe period of fear and discomfort caused by physical and emotional symptoms

Panic Attacks causing problems:

## What's happening?

Panic attacks give individuals very frightening moments. These symptoms can become so severe they are commonly mistaken for signs of a heart attack. The subsequent emotions caused by a panic attack cause an individual to believe they are in serious danger.

### Symptoms:

- ◆ Rapid heart beat
- ◆ Sweating/Shaking
- ◆ Choking sensation/Shortness of breath
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Chest pain
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Fear of losing control
- ◆ Chills/Hot flashes
- ◆ Numbness/Tingling sensation
- ◆ Muscle pain
- ◆ Consuming fear/Sense of impending death

**Individuals who have panic attacks react to nonthreatening situations as if they were threatening.**

## Causes of panic attacks:

- ◆ **Genetics.** Individuals whose relative are affected by panic attacks are more likely to have them.
- Studies have concluded different brain-wave patterns and reactions to certain chemicals in individuals who have panic attacks. This research suggests a biological tendency.
- ◆ **Stress.** Individuals who've recently had a major change or loss are more likely to have panic attacks; and individuals under constant stress.
  - ◆ **Drug Use.** Some triggers of panic attacks for individuals can be caffeine, nicotine, or marijuana; and a few medications can also trigger attacks.

### *If a panic attack happens to you...*

- ◆ **You aren't dying—even if it feels as if you are.**
- ◆ **You aren't going crazy—even if you think you are.**
- ◆ **You aren't making them up. Panic attacks are real.**
- ◆ **You can achieve relief. Panic attacks are treatable.**

