

## Causes of Panic

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**Body:** There may be a genetic predisposition to anxiety disorders; some sufferers report that a family member has or had a panic disorder or some other emotional disorder such as depression. Studies with twins have confirmed the possibility of 'genetic inheritance' of the disorder.

Panic Disorder could also be due to a biological malfunction, although a specific biological marker has yet to be identified.

All ethnic groups are vulnerable to panic disorder. For unknown reasons, women are twice as likely to get the disorder as men.

**Mind:** Stressful life events can trigger panic disorders. One association that has been noted is that of a recent loss or separation. Some researchers liken the 'life stressor' to a thermostat; that is, when stresses lower your resistance, the underlying physical predisposition kicks in and triggers an attack.

**Both:** Physical and psychological causes of panic disorder work together. Although initially attacks may come out of the blue, eventually the sufferer may actually help bring them on by responding to physical symptoms of an attack.

For example, if a person with panic disorder experiences a racing heartbeat caused by drinking coffee, exercising, or taking a certain medication, they might interpret this as a symptom of an attack and, because of their anxiety, actually bring on the attack. On the other hand, coffee, exercise, and certain medications sometimes do, in fact, cause panic attacks. One of the most frustrating things for the panic sufferer is never knowing how to isolate the different triggers of an attack. That's why the right therapy for panic disorder focuses on all aspects -- physical, psychological, and physiological -- of the disorder.