

This Free E-Book is brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**Panic Attacks and Things That Go Bump in the Night**

**By Dr. Dorothy McCoy**

**Panic Attacks and Things That Go Bump in the Night by Dr. Dorothy McCoy**

Panic attacks are extremely frightening. Panic sufferers often believe they are having a heart attack and they dash to their physician or end up in an emergency room. Which is exactly what they should do. An accurate diagnosis is the first step in relieving panic attacks. A diagnosis is vital, because panic attacks mimic a number of potentially serious medical conditions. The next step is treatment. No one should have to endure repeated episodes of distressing panic. Furthermore, early treatment may prevent the condition from becoming chronic.

Not all panic attacks are created equal. The symptoms are unique to the individual sufferer. However, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, typical symptoms are:

- Racing or pounding heart
- Sweating, flushing or feeling chilled
- Chest pains or tightness
- Difficulty getting your breath, or a sense of smothering or choking
- Dizziness, light-headedness, tingling or numbness
- Trembling or shaking
- Nausea or abdominal discomfort
- Fear of losing control

Sometimes panic attacks appear to come out of the blue without rhyme or reason. This is not true with a phobia, such as agoraphobia, which has a distinctive pattern. Agoraphobics may have an attack in situations from which escape is difficult or embarrassing (i.e., on a bridge, a crowded theater). Someone who is fearful of flying may have a panic attack while entering an airplane, or perhaps, while contemplating a flight. The person could then become frightened by the "idea" of having another panic attack. The panic attack itself becomes the feared event. He or she begins to avoid situations that are associated with the attacks. This can become a distressing pattern from which it is difficult to break free.

Cognitive theorists believe that our thoughts create our anxiety. Consider these examples for a moment. A professional athlete consistently felt his chest constrict and his heart pound whenever he

## Panic Attacks and Things That Go Bump in the Night

passed through a tunnel. A woman walking her dog in a park, a few blocks from her home, suddenly felt faint. If one were to ask the athlete what he thought immediately before the symptoms began, he might say, "Tunnels can collapse. If this one collapses I will be buried alive. I won't be able to breathe. I will suffocate." As he envisaged potential engineering blunders, a visualization of a collapsing tunnel abruptly flashed through his mind. He gasped for breath.

Let's return to the woman in the park. She might answer, if asked about her thoughts before she felt faint, "I am too far from home to cry out if someone jumped from the bushes and grabbed me. No one would hear me. I could be killed." Simultaneously, she visualized a huge Neanderthal of a man lunging for her. It is very likely that their thoughts and visualizations contributed the material to which they reacted. According to Aaron T. Beck (1976), we can learn to "observe that a thought links the external stimulus with the emotional response." In other words, "tunnel" does not signal danger, until the thought "it will collapse" links to it—stimulating the emotional response—*anxiety*.

As stated previously, panic attack symptoms are frightening. The attacks are especially disturbing when one does not understand why one's body is reacting in such a bizarre manner. A panic attack is an example of one's body doing what it was designed to do, yet, at an inappropriate time. The attacks are part of the body's cautionary or alarm system. It is saying, "Be alert, there is danger; react!" The autonomic nervous system cannot differentiate between a legitimate danger (an 18 wheeler running amuck) and environmental stress "created" by life in the worldwide web century. Heredity, other biological factors, stressful life circumstances, and thought patterns that create needless stress combine to encourage the onset of panic attacks. The specific panic mechanism is unknown. However, be assured researchers are eagerly seeking answers.

Is there any good news? Yes, panic attacks can be, and frequently are, successfully treated.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy and medication are commonly the recommended treatments. Anti-anxiety medication works rapidly to relieve distressing symptoms. Cognitive-behavioral therapy contributes tools with which to cope more adaptively, thereby, reducing the likelihood that panic attacks will reoccur.

What can you do if you are currently experiencing panic attacks? Here are a few suggestions:

Don't be frightened; panic attacks cannot harm you.

Write everything you can remember about your attack immediately after it passes (You will gather important information about when, where and under what circumstances your attacks occur.).

Watch those scary thoughts (The tunnel will not collapse. That is a safer bet than the lottery.).

Repeat to yourself, "I will not look crazy, collapse, die or lose control."

Try breathing deeply. Breathe in through your nose, hold it a few seconds, and then breathe out through your mouth. We tend to breathe in shallow, rapid little breaths when we are anxious, which can exacerbate the problem.

Get professional help.

Panic attacks are not an infrequent stress reaction. Panic sufferers have an abundance of company.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, approximately 3 million Americans will have panic disorder at some time during their lives.

Dr. Dorothy McCoy has a doctorate in Counseling Psychology and a Masters in Clinical Counseling. She loves to travel, garden and hunt for antiques, especially McCoy pottery. She has trained her canine companion, Mattie Mae McCoy, to stay at home, sleep, ignore all commands and eat hamburger laden dog food (Please do not tell Dr. Mast— Mattie's vet.). Mattie Mae has taught Dr. McCoy to work long, grueling hours to keep her in ground chuck.

### **Is What You Feel A Panic Attack?**

**By Kelly Gillis**

Your heart pounds, your palms sweat, you start shaking, you get short of breath. You experience a fear that seems overwhelming that came absolutely out of nowhere, and for no reason. You could have been driving your car, or awakened out of sleep, or at your desk performing your daily routine at your job. Perhaps it's the first time it's happened, perhaps not. If it's not you probably know that you aren't going to die, but you feel like it. If it's the first time you are scared to death.

No one really knows what causes a panic attack to come on. Some medical professionals say that they can be related to heredity, some say to stress. Some say if you have a history of other mental disorders, such as depression or some phobias you are more likely to experience panic attacks. Know that you are not alone. It is estimated that one out of three adults will suffer a panic attack in their lifetime.

Some professionals have broken down panic attacks into three distinct types, spontaneous, specific and situational. A spontaneous panic attack would be as suggested by its name, one that happens unexpectedly. Panic attacks called specific are brought on, as also suggested by its name by specific repeated situations, and situational panic attacks may come while doing a certain type of activity, such as riding a bike, even though there is no panic or fright involved with the activity.

Some people suffer from a panic attack only once. These may be panic attacks which are brought on by major life stresses and ease after the stress is eliminated. Some suffer from repeated panic attacks. The type of help you seek for panic attacks and the type of help you are given by medical professionals will be based on how many panic attacks you suffer from. Some health care professionals and organizations seek to treat people who suffer from infrequent panic attacks with a step program, similar to that used with alcoholics anonymous. Some medical professionals will treat more severe and recurrent panic attacks with medication. Generally patients who suffer from repeated panic attacks will benefit by being referred to a psychologist or psychiatrist for counseling.

To learn more about panic attacks

please visit



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by [Natural-Aging.com](http://Natural-Aging.com).

**100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment**  
**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**