

Panic Disorder (PD)

WHAT IS PANIC DISORDER?

Children typically experience panic attacks as a sudden rush of fear that comes together with a number of physical feelings (like a racing heart, breathlessness, tightness in the throat or chest, sweating, light-headedness, and tingling). During a panic attack, the child may believe that he/she is dying or that something terrible is happening to them.



Panic disorder is a fear or worry about having panic attacks. Children with many types of anxiety may experience panic attacks or panic like symptoms in a feared situation (like before giving a speech for children or when going into a new situation, or when approaching a dog). This is different from panic disorder. For children with panic

disorder, the fear is of the panic attack itself (“I might be dying”) rather than of the situation (e.g., people laughing, dog biting, getting lost).

HOW COMMON IS PANIC DISORDER?

Panic disorder is not common in young children and is more likely to be found in older adolescents/young adults. Rates of panic disorder in children and younger adolescents have been shown to be less than 1%. If a child begins to avoid many situations because of their panic attacks this is referred to as panic disorder with agoraphobia. If this occurs it is worthwhile seeking professional help.

FIND OUT MORE

Emotional Health Clinic
Macquarie University NSW 2109 Australia
T: +61 (2) 9850 8711
ehc.admin@mq.edu.au
CRICOS Provider No 00002J