

Symptoms

Agoraphobia

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The severity of agoraphobia varies among different people.

Someone with severe agoraphobia may be unable to leave the house. Someone who has mild agoraphobia may be able to travel short distances without problems.

The symptoms of agoraphobia can broadly fall into 3 types:

- physical
- cognitive
- behavioural

Physical symptoms

The physical symptoms of agoraphobia usually only happen in situations or environments that cause anxiety.

The physical symptoms of agoraphobia can be similar to those of a [panic attack](#) and may include:

- rapid heartbeat
- rapid breathing (hyperventilating)
- feeling hot and sweaty
- feeling sick
- chest pain
- difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- diarrhoea
- trembling
- dizziness
- ringing in the ears (tinnitus)

- feeling faint

Cognitive symptoms

The cognitive symptoms of agoraphobia are feelings or thoughts that can be related to the physical symptoms.

Cognitive symptoms may include a fear that:

- a panic attack will make you look stupid or feel embarrassed in front of other people
- a panic attack will be life threatening – for example, you may be worried your heart will stop or you'll be unable to breathe
- you would be unable to escape from a place or situation if you were to have a panic attack
- you're losing your sanity
- you may lose control in public
- you may tremble and blush in front of people
- people may stare at you

There are also psychological symptoms that are not related to panic attacks, such as:

- feeling you would be unable to function or survive without the help of others
- a fear of being left alone in your house (monophobia)
- a general feeling of anxiety or dread

Behavioural symptoms

Symptoms of agoraphobia relating to behaviour include:

- avoiding situations that could lead to panic attacks - crowded places, public transport, queues
- being housebound – not being able to leave the house for long periods of time
- needing to be with someone you trust when going anywhere
- avoiding being far away from home

Some people are able to force themselves to confront uncomfortable situations. But they feel considerable fear and anxiety while doing so.

When to get help

Talk to your GP if you think you have symptoms of agoraphobia and it's interfering with your life.

Talk to your GP if you have any of the following:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- headaches

- dizziness
 - fainting episodes
 - unexplained weakness
 - the sensation that your heart is beating irregularly (palpitations)
 - [depression](#)
 - thoughts of suicide or [self-harm](#)
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