

Common Health Anxiety Triggers and Obsessions

Triggers	Obsessions/Fears/Worries
Fasting from eating	Fear that something bad might happen medically by fasting, or that I could get ill or panicky from fasting and require hospitalization
Change in heartbeat	Fear of having heart attack
Seeing social media stories, movies, shows about cancer, flesh eating bacteria, or other illnesses	Fear that I have the disease, I met get it, or that I might not stop worrying about getting it
General pain, recurring discomfort in my body that I can't explain (abdomen, head, leg)	Fear that I might have something bad, like a blood clot, organ failure, or chronic ailment
Thinking about getting pregnant, trying to get pregnant, being pregnant	Fear of either me or my baby dying during pregnancy or delivery
Going to sleep	Fear of dying during sleep, cardiac event, heart attack
Everyday injuries, sports injuries, or medical maladies	Fear it might get worse, or the pain will never go away, and I won't be able to tolerate it
Feeling bumps on head when shampooing or brushing hair	Fear I have skin cancer, lesions, external brain tumors
Presence of stomachaches	Fear it's a sign of some underlying disease or that I will throw up and lose control
Trying new foods	Fear of severe food allergy reactions, anaphylaxis, throwing up in public, being hospitalized
Food with odd textures	Fear I might choke or have an allergic reaction
Going into a body of water wearing contacts	Fear of getting major infection in my eyeballs that will lead to blindness and loss of function
Going into fresh body of water	Fear of getting an illness, disease, or brain eating amoeba
Any situations that "feel" out of my comfort zone	Fear of deadly panic attack that will require hospitalization or lead to stroke or another medical crisis
Medical procedures	Fear that the procedure will be "botched" leaving me disfigured or sicker than I was before the surgery
Getting an MRI or CT	Fear that the procedure will cause cancer cells to develop in my body
Dizzy or panic-like physical symptoms such as POTS (postural orthostatic tachycardic syndrome), heart pounding, tunnel vision, nausea	Fear that something bad might happen medically, it might not reverse, I could require hospitalization

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Triggers	Obsessions/Fears/Worries
Consumption of medicine, food, or drink that seems new to me	Fear that something bad might happen, like getting poisoned or my throat will swell
Consumption of medicine, food, or drink that seems new to me	Fear that someone tampered with it
Immunizations, needle procedures	Fear that I will have some sort of negative health reaction, or the needle puncture will rupture an underlying organ or artery
Unexplained neurological symptoms (headaches, head pain, blurred vision)	Fear that symptoms will persist and worsen, I won't be able to function at work, I'm going to throw up, or maybe that I have a brain tumor or clot
Complex pain symptoms	Fear that symptoms will be misdiagnosed, doctors won't understand my symptoms, that MDs didn't do the right procedure
Spotting during menstrual cycle	Fear of uterine cancer, infertility
Unexplained lower abdomen discomfort in a woman	Fear of unplanned pregnancy, miscarriage
Odd breathing gasps in moments when not anxious or exercising	Fear of blood clots, lung cancer, or long-Covid lung issues
Memory lapses, forgetting names, mixing up details at work	Fear of early onset dementia, Alzheimer's, or other cognitive degenerative diseases
Tension headaches, sinus infections	Fear of brain tumor or some other brain disease; fear of ALS, stroke, MS
Chest pain	Fear of heart attack or another cardiovascular event
Seeing family members battle medical issues	Fear that the same medical issues will afflict me
Experiencing weird sensation in mouth after eating	Fear of food allergy, anaphylaxis, vomiting, weight loss
Getting sunburned	Fear of getting aggressive form of skin cancer
Feeling overheated	Fear about thyroid issues, CV issues, stroke
Getting bloody noses	Fear of stroke, brain clot, brain tumor
Right-sided abdominal pain	Fear of kidney issues, IBS, liver disease
Painful cough	Terrified that the "one time" I smoked caused lung cancer, COPD, or debilitating asthma
Indigestion, GERD	Fear of throat or esophageal cancer
Changes in skin color, texture	Fear of skin cancer or other medical issues
Recurring diarrhea or constipation	Fear of colon cancer, severe gut health issues, or kidney or other organ problems
Cellphone usage near ear or sitting in pocket	Fear of brain cancer, cancer of genitalia

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