

Sour Power: Can Candy Help Stave off Panic and Anxiety Attacks? – Ask an Expert

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A popular trend claims that sour candy can help stave off anxiety and panic attacks. The strategy seems fascinatingly simple and well worth a trip to the store for Warheads and sour gummy worms, but consider the science behind it.

- According to [Health.com](#), when a panic attack or bout of anxiety hits, the theory suggests that eating tart candies can distract the brain from negative emotions, zeroing attention in on the sour, tingling sensation in the mouth. Many online posts discuss keeping sour candies on hand for potentially anxious times, such as on an airplane or before public speaking.
- Consuming sour candy to alleviate a panic attack aligns with the approach of employing the five senses for grounding – what we hear, feel, see, taste, and smell. The method involves using physical and mental exercises to redirect your attention to the current moment and shift focus away from anxious thoughts. In the case of eating sour candy, it means using the sense of taste as a distraction, prompting the mind to concentrate on the present by savoring each bite. To make the most of this technique, consider the taste and smell, paying close attention to the flavors that linger on your tongue. The method would not be effective if you put the candy in your

mouth and devoured it. The real benefit comes from focusing on the sensation in your mouth.

- Grounding techniques can help create space from distressing feelings in nearly any situation, but they can also be helpful for improving mood, anxiety, well-being, stress, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and dissociation.
- [Healthline.com](#) shares 30 grounding techniques to quiet distressing thoughts. Some physical tasks include: putting your hands in water, breathing deeply, savoring food or drink, taking a walk, holding a piece of ice, moving your body, savoring a scent, and listening to your surroundings. Mental tasks include: doing math equations, reciting something, making yourself laugh, and playing a memory game, among others. Another suggested method is the 5-4-3-2-1 method. Here you list five things you hear, four things you see, three things you can touch from where you're sitting, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. Paying attention to the small things you may not always notice can help with distraction.

It's important to note that the use of grounding methods, including eating sour candies, can be helpful tools, but they won't address the root cause of panic and anxiety attacks. Working with a licensed mental health professional can help identify the causes of panic attacks and provide strategies to potentially eliminate the need for techniques such as eating sour candies.

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