

Health Anxiety *Cheat Sheet*



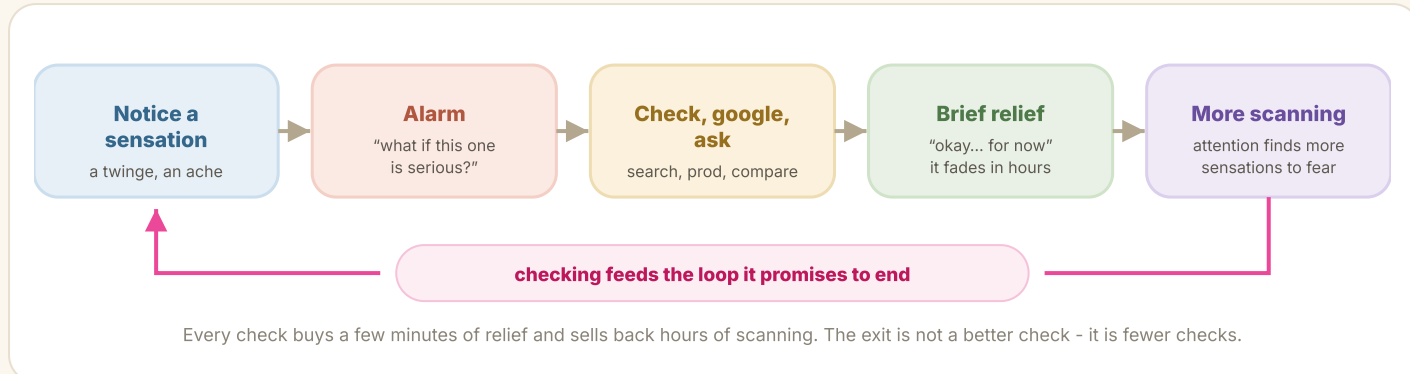
When every twinge gets a background check, the checking itself becomes the problem.
One loop to recognize, five rules that quietly starve it.

1 SPOT THE LOOP

2 FIND THE RULE IT BREAKS

3 FOLLOW THAT RULE ONCE, TODAY

THE LOOP why checking never settles it



THE RULES five ways to stop feeding it

RULE 1 • SEARCHING

The googling rule

A symptom gets **one search maximum**, from one reputable source, then the tab closes. Dr. Google always finds cancer because the worst cases get written about most - nobody posts about the headache that was just a headache.

IN PRACTICE One trusted medical site, five minutes, tab closed. No forums.

RULE 2 • REASSURANCE

The reassurance budget

Asking "is this normal?" works **once**. By the tenth ask the answer stops landing and the asking itself becomes the habit your alarm relies on. Spend one ask, then let the answer stay the answer.

SAY IT "I already asked. Asking again feeds the worry, not me."

RULE 3 • ATTENTION

The body-scan paradox

Scanning **for** symptoms creates sensations to find - attention amplifies whatever it lands on. Anxiety itself adds a racing heart, tight chest, and dizziness: real feelings, freshly made, waiting to be scanned next.

IN PRACTICE Catch a scan starting? Move attention outward: sounds, hands, the room.

RULE 4 • CARE

The one-doctor deal

One trusted doctor, a check-up rhythm you agree on together, and a deal: a new symptom gets one appointment, not five opinions. Between visits the question stays closed, because a professional closed it.

SAY IT "This has an owner and a date. It is handled until then."

RULE 5 • POSTPONE

The postpone trick

The worry gets an appointment too. Note it in one line - "chest twinge, Tuesday" - and review the list at **one set time each week**. Most entries look smaller by review day; anything that has genuinely changed or persisted has earned its one appointment (see Rule 4).



BEFORE YOU FOLD THIS UP

Health anxiety is not weakness or hypochondria-as-a-punchline. It is **caring about your life, turned up too loud**. The goal was never to stop caring - it is right-sized caring: alert enough to see a doctor when something truly changes, calm enough to live your life between check-ups.