Phobias

URL of this page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/phobias.html

A phobia is a type of anxiety disorder. It is a strong, irrational fear of something that poses little or no real danger.

There are many specific phobias. Acrophobia is a fear of heights. Agoraphobia is a fear of public places, and claustrophobia is a fear of closed-in places. If you become anxious and extremely self-conscious in everyday social situations, you could have a social phobia. Other common phobias involve tunnels, highway driving, water, flying, animals and blood.

People with phobias try to avoid what they are afraid of. If they cannot, they may experience

- Panic and fear
- Rapid heartbeat
- Shortness of breath
- Trembling
- A strong desire to get away

Phobias usually start in children or teens, and continue into adulthood. The causes of specific phobias are known, but they sometimes run in families.

Treatment helps most people with phobias. Options include medicines, therapy or both.

*NH: National Institute of Mental Health*

**Start Here**

- Phobias [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/phobias/DS00272/METHOD=print&DSECTION=all] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

**Overviews**

- Phobic Disorders [http://www.merckmanuals.com/home/print/mental_health_disorders/anxiety_disorders/phobic_disorders.html] (Merck & Co., Inc.)

**Treatment**


**Specific Conditions**

- Agoraphobia [http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/agoraphobia/DS00894/DSECTION=all&METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Problems Urinating in Public (Paruresis) [http://www.urologyhealth.org/urology/index.cfm?article=107] (Urology Care Foundation)
• Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia) [http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/social-anxiety-disorder/DSO0595/METHOD=print] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  
  

Clinical Trials
• ClinicalTrials.gov: Agoraphobia [http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Agoraphobia%22] NIH (National Institutes of Health)

• ClinicalTrials.gov: Phobic Disorders [http://clinicaltrials.gov/search/open/condition=%22Phobic+Disorders%22] NIH (National Institutes of Health)

Research

Journal Articles
References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)


Directories
• Find a Therapist [http://www.adaa.org/netforum/findatherapist] (Anxiety Disorders Association of America)

• Find Your Local NAMI [http://www.nami.org/PrinterTemplate.cfm?Section=Your_Local_NAMI&Template=/CustomSource/AffiliateFinder.cfm] (NAMI)


• Mental Health Treatment Program Locator [http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MTTreatmentLocator/faces/quickSearch.jspx] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

• Psychologist Locator [http://locator.apa.org/] (American Psychological Association)

Organizations
• Anxiety Disorders Association of America [http://www.adaa.org/]

• NAMI [http://www.nami.org/]
  
  Also available in Spanish [http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=NAMI[en_espa%F1oI]

• National Institute of Mental Health [http://www.nimh.nih.gov/] NIH

MedlinePlus Magazine

Children
Anxiety, Fears, and Phobias (For Parents) [http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/anxiety.html] (Nemours Foundation)
Also available in Spanish [http://kidshealth.org/parent/en_espanol/emociones/anxiety_esp.html]

Also available in Spanish [http://kidshealth.org/kid/en_espanol/sentimientos/phobias_esp.html]

Teenagers

Also available in Spanish [http://kidshealth.org/teen/en_espanol/mente/social_phobia_esp.html]

Patient Handouts

Panic disorder with agoraphobia [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000923.htm]
Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000923.htm]
Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000956.htm]
Also available in Spanish [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/ency/article/000957.htm]

You may also be interested in these related encyclopedia pages:

Panic disorder with agoraphobia [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000923.htm]

You may also be interested in these related MedlinePlus topics:


The primary NIH organization for research on Phobias is the National Institute of Mental Health [http://www.nimh.nih.gov]

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