

Phobias can have a significant and painful effect on your life. You may feel anxious all the time if you have to come into contact with your fears. Feeling that you need to avoid objects or situations can reduce your enjoyment of life and limit the things that you can do.

Symptoms of a phobia include:

Physical symptoms:

- Feeling unsteady, dizzy, lightheaded or faint.
- Feeling like you are choking.
- A pounding heart, palpitations or accelerated heart rate.
- Chest pain or tightness in the chest.
- Sweating.
- Hot or cold flushes.
- Shortness of breath or a smothering sensation.
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea.
- Numbness or tingling sensations.
- Trembling or shaking.

Other symptoms:

- Feeling out of touch with reality or detached from your body.
- A fear of fainting.
- A fear of losing control.
- A fear of dying.

Experiencing this type of acute fear is extremely unpleasant and can be very frightening. It may make you feel stressed, out of control and overwhelmed. It may also lead to feelings of embarrassment, anxiety and depression. As a result, many people with phobias avoid situations where they might have to face their fear. While this is an effective strategy to start with, avoiding your fears often causes them to become worse, and can start to have a significant impact on how you live your life.

People can be phobic of many objects or situations, although the most common are phobias of insects, small animals, heights, public transport, storms, closed spaces, tunnels, crowds and water.

Some of the other possible phobias are:

Spiders, wasps , snakes, birds, dogs, cats, mice, horses, feathers, cows and sheep, driving , flying, heights, lifts, moving staircases, needles, injections, choking , enclosed spaces, incontinence, vomit, vomiting, blood, lightning, thunder, bridges, crowds, darkness, the sea, going out alone and social situations. ●

Hoarding