A **phobia** (from the [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language): φόβος, [*Phóbos*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phobos_(moon)), meaning "fear" or "morbid fear") is, when used in the context of [clinical psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clinical_psychology), a type of [anxiety disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anxiety_disorder), usually defined as a persistent fear of an object or situation in which the sufferer commits to great lengths in avoiding, typically disproportional to the actual danger posed, often being recognized as irrational. In the event the phobia cannot be avoided entirely, the sufferer will endure the situation or object with marked [distress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distress_(medicine)) and significant interference in social or occupational activities.

Author: Edmund J. Bourne

Date: 2011, Title: The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook

New Harbinger Publications. Dublin, pp. 50–51

Phobias are largely underreported, probably because many phobia sufferers find ways to avoid the situations of which they are phobic. Therefore, statistics that estimate how many people suffer from phobias vary widely, but at minimum, phobias afflict more than 6 million people in the United States, with the average age of developing a phobia being about 10 years of age. Other facts about phobias include that these illnesses are not unusual and are thought to affect up to 28 out of every 100 people, and in all western countries, phobias strike 7%-13% of the population. Women tend to be twice as likely to suffer from a phobia compared to men.

Author: Roxanne Dryden Edwards and Melissa Conrad Stoppler

Date: 9/12/2012, Title: Phobias

<http://www.medicinenet.com/phobias/page2.htm#what_is_a_phobia_what_are_the_different_kinds_of_phobias>

A phobia refers to an intense and irrational fear of a specific situation, object, person or activity. While we are generally familiar with common phobias such as acrophobia (fear of heights) and claustrophobia (fear of small spaces), some phobias are less well known. **Optophobia: Fear of opening one’s eyes**  
Although the act of opening our eyes is something that few of us ever give thought to, for optophobics this simple, daily act can be a nightmare. Luckily, if you are reading this list, you most likely aren’t suffering from this condition!  
**Chorophobia: Fear of dancing**  
If nightclubs, weddings and small children in tutus fill you with an overwhelming sense of dread, you could be suffering from chorophobia – the fear of dancing.   
**Geliophobia: Fear of laughter**  
Many studies suggest that laughter is great for our health and helping to build social bonds for those suffering from geliophobia, the act of laughing, or being around those who laugh, can actually cause overwhelming fear and anxiety. Suggested reasons for geliophobia are anxiety about laughing in inappropriate situations or of being laughed at by others.  
**Arachibutyrophobia: Fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth**  
It may not be a debilitating or life-altering condition, yet no list of bizarre phobias would be complete without the inclusion of arachibutyrephobia – the inexplicable fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth.   
**Heliphobia: Fear of sunlight**  
A rare but unfortunate condition, heliphobia refers to the fear of sunlight. Not only does going out in the sun instigate severe feelings of anxiety and panic in sufferers, but heliophobics may also experience fear of bright lights.

**Deipnophobia: Fear of dinner conversations**  
While many people suffer from a general form of social anxiety, deipnophobia takes a rather more specific twist and is restricted to a fear of carrying on a conversation while eating. Although this can cause discomfort and awkwardness for dinner party guests, it seems that deipnophics could be on to something, as remaining silent while eating can actually help benefit digestion.  
**Neophobia: Fear of new things**  
While many people are wary of change, neophobia refers to an intense and irrational fear of all new things and experiences. Neophobia can impact on happiness and wellbeing as sufferers miss out on many life-enhancing experiences.  
**Syngenesphobia: Fear of relatives**  
Many of us experience embarrassment or irritation with our families at times. However, those with syngenesphobia suffer from an excessive fear of their relatives. Unless there is a specific, explicable reason for these fears, it is worth seeking help to alleviate this phobia.  
**Ablutophobia: Fear of washing and bathing**  
Although many children are resistant to being washed, this condition is much less common in adults. However, for a rare few the thought of stepping under a shower is quite literally terrifying! The good news for ablutophobics is that skipping the occasional shower can help to preserve natural oils and good bacteria that protect your skin and help to prevent disease. However, making it a regular habit is unlikely to benefit either your health or social life.  
**Geniophobia: Fear of chins**  
Geniophobia is an overwhelming fear of chins. Yes, that innocuous body part attached to the lower part of your face! Further phobias of seemingly innocent body parts include genuphobia (fear of knees), chirophobia (fear of hands) and ishicascadiggaphobia (fear of elbows).

**Author: Leonard Marvell Sutter**

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