

Wellness Lifestyle / Health & Wellness

# What Kylie Jenner and Sylvester Stallone have in common with 10 per cent of us: phobias and why we get them

More than seven per cent of people suffer from social phobias including agoraphobia and less than one per cent have a fear of spiders

Most phobias begin in childhood and some can last an entire lifetime without treatment

Reading Time: **4 minutes**

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Mine is about snakes. My daughter, grasshoppers, her godmother, sticky labels. I'm talking phobias. My daughter will flee a room if a grasshopper makes an entrance, her godmother can't peel the price tag off a gift, an avocado or even a box of tissues. And I'm not just afraid of snakes in slithering, slippery real life: since childhood I've been unable to comfortably turn the pages of a book if it meant touching colour pictures of snakes.

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Phobia derives from the Greek *phobos*, which means fear or horror.

The National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland, says phobias are the most common mental disorders in the US. Up to 10 per cent of people have specific phobias, for example 7.1 per cent experience phobias with regard to social situations, and 0.9 per cent have agoraphobia – the fear of being out in open or crowded spaces.

Clinical psychologist Dr Quratulain Zaidi from MindnLife in Hong Kong says research shows anxiety disorders are the most prevalent mental health disorders.

Phobias are a type of anxiety disorder that causes someone to experience extreme, irrational fear about a situation, living creature, place or object.



Fear of snakes is a common phobia. Photo: Alamy