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# *University Women*

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## Phobias

**Fear** is the general reaction to anything threatening or any danger. It is normal and even helpful to experience fear in dangerous situations. Fear is an adaptive human response. It serves a protective purpose, activating the automatic “fight-or-flight” response. With our bodies and minds alert and ready for action, we are able to respond quickly and protect ourselves.

However, when fear is irrational or excessive it cannot be called normal. An abnormally fearful response to a danger which is imagined or is irrationally exaggerated involving emotional and physical reactions to feared objects or situations is called a Phobia. A phobia is an intense fear of something that in reality poses little or no danger. The individual experiences extreme anxiety which interferes with his normal functioning. One experiences physical symptoms like difficulty in breathing, racing or pounding heart, chest pain or tightness, hot or cold flashes, dizziness, sweating and emotional signs, such as,

feeling of overwhelming anxiety or panic, feeling an intense need to escape, feeling detached from oneself, fear of losing control or going crazy, feeling like one is going to die or pass out and being aware that one is overreacting, but feeling powerless to control one’s fear. The various kinds of phobias commonly seen are:

- Animal phobias - Examples include fear of snakes, spiders, rodents or of dogs.
- Situational phobias - Examples include fear of enclosed spaces (claustrophobia), fear of flying, driving, tunnels or of bridges.
- Blood-Injection-Injury phobia - The fear of blood, injury, needles or other medical procedures.
- Natural environment phobias - Examples include fear of heights, storms, water or of the dark.

Timely help, regular therapy, overcoming ones fear by facing them and relaxation techniques can help dealing with phobias.

### HON. TREASURER

WGU urgently needs a member for the post of an Hon. Treasurer, preferably acquainted with Accounts and an ease with figures.

Do call up the WGU office. Tel. no. 22186220, 22 181947

## CERC NEWS

### Four brochures released to empower consumers

To empower consumers of the state, CERC, in partnership with the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of Gujarat has released four brochures in Gujarati. This is the first time such an initiative has been taken by a consumer organisation in the state.

Very often, consumers feel helpless and do not know how to redress their grievances regarding credit/debit card fraud, harassment on social media platforms, misleading advertisements that lure them to buy products/services and errors

in electricity billing.

The many complaints received in these areas prompted the CERC to bring out the following handy, easy to understand and visually appealing brochures: (i) How to shop safely and successfully online: (ii) Beware of cyber crime (iii) Protest against misleading advertisements and (iv) Rights of electricity consumers. CERC has printed 60,000 brochures in all and will be distributing them to the leading voluntary consumer organisations (VCOs) located across Gujarat.

## HEALTH MATTERS

### The germ breeders around you

If you thought that disease causing micro-organisms are confined to garbage dumps, toilet seats and other obviously dirty surfaces, think again! There are many other germ-friendly spots. Some are described below.

**Mobile phones :** A 'must have' for almost all of us, they harbour more bacteria than a lavatory seat, the sole of a shoe or a door handle, says a professor of microbiology at Manchester Metropolitan University! Mobiles themselves generate heat. Also, they are held in hands or kept in pockets or bags which are normally warm and humid

places. This combination of temperature and moisture causes breeding of germs, including staphylococcus aureus, which can cause from pimples and boils to pneumonia and meningitis.

**Solution :** Regularly clean your mobile with an antibiotic wipe and, whenever possible, store it in a cool, dry place.

**Sandpits :** Playing in sandpits may be a source of dangerous infections. When 107 sandpits in public parks were examined by Japanese microbiologists, about three-quarters contained cat faecal matter, with just under a tenth containing hazardous

toxoplasma parasite eggs. The parasite can survive for days, and if they get onto a child's hand and his/her mouth they can cause blindness.

**Solution :** Make sure children wash their hands thoroughly immediately after playing in sandpits. If you have no access to soap and water, use an alcohol-based cleanser. Encourage your kids to get involved in some other activity.

**Cash points :** ATMs and cash itself are among the biggest culprits for spreading disease. They are touched by thousands of people a day and hardly ever properly cleaned. In a study in UK, 40% of ATM keypads showed levels of bacteria which could cause severe gastroenteritis and a variety of skin infections.

**Solution :** After touching cash or ATM, keep your hands off your eyes, nose and mouth -- three main entry points for bugs -- until you've washed them with soap and water.

**Hand dryers :** The outlet nozzle of hand dryers is often contaminated by bacteria. The heat from the dryer can further increase the number of germs. When you use the dryer, bacteria such as salmonella and E. coli are blown onto your hands and into the atmosphere.

**Solution :** Wash and then dry your

hands thoroughly using paper towels instead. According to a study, disposable paper towels remove 58% of bugs and cotton roller-towels 45%.

**Shower heads :** Researchers at the University of Colorado in the US have found that nearly a third of regular household shower heads contained significant levels of mycobacterium avium, a bug that causes lung infections. Showers have also been identified as a route for spreading other infectious diseases with a bacterium called pseudomonas aeruginosa.

**Solution :** Run the shower for 30 seconds before exposing yourself to stagnant water. Use metal shower heads, which are believed to resist the germ build-up.

**Make-up testers :** The tester samples at cosmetics shops can be host to many dangerous bugs, including herpes viruses. A researcher at Jefferson Medical College, Pennsylvania, found that all the make-up testers analysed contained E.coli that causes stomach cramps and diarrhoea. Dangerous staphylococcus and streptococcus bacteria were also found.

**Solution :** Avoid unnecessary use of make-up testers. Careful shops have cotton swabs for testers and clean the surface with a tissue dipped in alcohol after each customer.

SOURCE: DAILYMAIL.CO.UK

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### **To All MOTHERS ...**

Somebody said it takes about six weeks to get back to normal after you've had a baby... somebody doesn't know that once you're a mother, 'normal' is history.

Somebody said you learn how to be a mother by instinct... somebody never took a three-year-old shopping.

Somebody said you can't love the second child as much as you love the first... somebody doesn't have two children.

Somebody said the hardest part of being a mother is labour and delivery... somebody never watched her 'baby' get on the bus for the first day of kindergarten or on a plane headed for military 'boot camp.'

Somebody said a mother can stop worrying after her child gets married... somebody doesn't know that marriage adds a new son or daughter-in-law to a mother's heartstrings.

Somebody said a mother's job is done when her last child leaves home... somebody never had grandchildren.

Somebody said your mother knows you love her, so you don't need to tell her... somebody isn't a mother.

### **NEWS FROM GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL, GENEVA International Day of the Girl Child**

#### **What is International Day of the Girl Child (IDGC)?**

IDGC, celebrated annually on 11 October, raises awareness of the systemic threats and abuses of girls' human rights across the globe. It highlights certain harmful practices that disproportionately affect girls including child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and female infanticide.

Discussion on the girl child was formally introduced at the international level in January 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. GWI members were instrumental in the advocacy efforts to see the girl child given formal recognition and protection.

#### **How can NFAs get involved?**

NFAs can use GWI's policy paper and press release on the protection of the girl child to reach out to policymakers to discuss national and international political commitments. This could include advocating for the ratification and incorporation of international legal instruments including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on Consent to Marriage. NFAs can also encourage the inclusion of human rights education, both institutionally at schools and informally within communities, in order to raise awareness of the harmful practices affecting the girl child.

For further information on advocacy, email Aoife Hegarty: [ah@graduatewomen.org](mailto:ah@graduatewomen.org).

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## SHOULD WE GIVE UP THE LPG SUBSIDY?

I could not understand why the government was so generously extending a subsidy to ALL households after raising prices of LPG cylinders. Where was the point in granting reasonably well-off families way above the poverty line a refund? It made no sense to me.

Of course, now the government in its infinite wisdom is running a huge advertising campaign, costing lakhs, suggesting or rather imploring citizens to give up the subsidy voluntarily. Why not, I thought at first, we should give it up in the national interest and as patriotic persons.

Mulling over it, however, I have decided against it. Why should I forego the subsidy for the benefit of the government which has

done hardly anything to improve the economic or social conditions of its people and is busy diverting funds elsewhere? Honest tax-payers are forced to see their hard-earned money being frittered away year after year. Cylinder supplies are at best erratic and consumers are put to great inconvenience from time to time.

In view of all this, I have decided that I will diligently collect the subsidies coming my way and give it to a needy woman of my choice, who struggles to keep her household budget and who juggles her limited resources to meet all the ever-escalating expenses.

Does anyone else agree? Perhaps the CCAC should take up this issue as a counter campaign.

— Ed

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**Yield not thy neck  
To fortune's yoke, but let thy dauntless mind  
Still ride in triumph over all mischance.**

— Shakespeare, Henry VI.

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