

# HELP!

## Ask MARIA

Today we're going to look at fears and phobias. Everybody's afraid of something – elevators, insects, snakes – and famous people have fears, too. Did you know that Daniel Radcliffe is scared of clowns, Orlando Bloom is scared of pigs, and Nicole Kidman is scared of butterflies? For Justin Timberlake, it's spiders, and for Matt Damon, snakes. For most people, these fears aren't very important. However, when a fear becomes a phobia – an extreme and uncontrollable fear – it can cause serious problems.



### Carlos, 14 (California)

"I can't sleep at night without a light, and sometimes it can be embarrassing. Next week, I'm traveling to New York on a school trip, and I'm going to share a room with other students. I don't want them to think I'm a baby! Please help. I'm really worried!"

Don't be embarrassed. Did you know that Keanu Reeves is afraid of the dark? And no one says he's a baby! Don't worry about what other people will think of you. Just tell your roommates that you want the light on at night like it's the most normal thing in the world.

### Isabella, 13 (Florida)

My uncle is getting married next month, and my mom, my dad, and I are going to the wedding – in Las Vegas! The problem is that I'm terrified of flying, and the flight to Las Vegas takes four and a half hours. What am I going to do?"

Lots of people are afraid of flying. Jennifer Aniston, for example, hates planes, so you're in good company! Try to relax before the flight. If you get some exercise, you'll feel tired, and then maybe you can sleep. Listen to your favorite music. When you feel nervous, close your eyes, and take long, deep breaths. If you do just one or two of these things, you'll be fine!

## Reading: An advice column



1. Look at the famous people in the pictures. What do you think they're afraid of?
2. Read and listen to the online advice column and check your answers to the question in Exercise 1.

3. Read the advice column again and answer the questions.

1. What is the difference between a fear and a phobia?  
phobia is an extreme and uncontrollable fear.
2. Why does Isabella have to travel?  
Because her uncle is getting married.
3. What is Maria's advice to Isabella?  
Maybe she can sleep and listen her favorite music.
4. Why does Carlos have to travel?  
He is traveling to New York on a school trip.
5. What is Carlos worried about?  
People will think he is a baby
6. What is Maria's advice to Carlos?  
He just tell his roommates that he wants the light on.

4. **YOUR TURN** Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions.

1. Do you think Maria gave good advice?
2. Do you know of any other famous people who have fears or phobias? What are their fears?
3. Do you think it's easy to help people with phobias? Why or why not?

## DID YOU KNOW...?

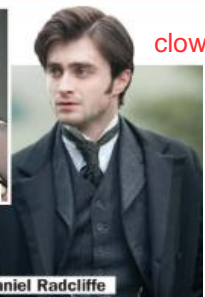
Arachnophobia – fear of spiders – is the most common phobia. Fifty percent of all women suffer from arachnophobia.



Matt Damon



Jennifer Aniston



Daniel Radcliffe



Nicole Kidman



Justin Timberlake



Orlando Bloom



Keanu Reeves