

Motion Sickness

Definition

- Symptoms triggered by a spinning, rocking or rolling motions
- The main symptoms are dizziness and nausea

Health Information

Symptoms

- Dizziness and unsteady walking
- Nausea and vomiting are also common
- Before age 6, the main symptom is dizziness and the need to lie down.
- After age 12, the main symptom is nausea (feeling sick to the stomach)

Causes

- Symptoms are mainly triggered by motion. Sea sickness or amusement park sickness are the most common types. Amusement park rides that spin or whirl are the big offenders. The Tilt-a-whirl is a good example of a ride to avoid. Also seen during travel by train, aircraft and even car.
- The cause is a sensitive equilibrium center. This center is found in the inner ear.
- As a car passenger driving on winding roads, 25% of people develop symptoms. Under extreme conditions (e.g., high seas) over 90% of people have symptoms.
- Strongly genetic: If one parent has it, 50% of the children will have it.
- It is not related to emotional problems. The child cannot control it with will power.
- Motion sickness symptoms are usually worse in children.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Motion sickness is a common normal reaction that occurs in 25% of people.
- Caused by increased sensitivity of the inner ear.
- It is not related to emotional problems or any physical disease.
- In the future, take a special medicine ahead of time to prevent it.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Rest:

- Have your child lie down and rest. If your child goes to sleep, all the better.

3. Fluids:

- Give only sips of clear fluids (water is best). Do this until the stomach settles down.

4. Vomiting:

- Prepare for vomiting. Keep a vomiting pan handy.
- Usually, children don't vomit more than once with motion sickness.

5. What to Expect:

- All symptoms of motion sickness usually disappear in 4 hours after stopping the motion.
- As for the future, people usually don't outgrow motion sickness. Sometimes, it becomes less severe in adults.

6. Motion Sickness Medicines:

- Buy some Dramamine (dimenhydrinate) (OTC) at your drug store. In the future, give Dramamine to prevent motion sickness.
- It comes in 50 mg regular and chewable tablets or in 25 mg Kids chewable.
- Dosage: do not use under age 2.
- 2 to 5 years (12.5 mg): 1/2 Kids chewable
- 6-11 years (25 mg): 1 Kids chewable
- 12 and older (50 mg): 1 regular tablet or chewable
- Give the Dramamine 1 hour before traveling or going to an amusement park.
- The tablets give 6 hours of protection and are very helpful.
- Bonine is another special OTC medicine that helps.
- Benadryl can also be used to prevent motion sickness. Use this if you do not have any Dramamine or Bonine.

7. Prevention Tips for Car Trips:

- If your child is over 12 years old, sit him in the front seat.
- Before age 12, have your child sit in the middle back seat. This should help him look out the front window.
- Have your child look out the front window, not the side one.
- Discourage looking at books or DVDs during car travel.
- Keep a window cracked to provide fresh air.
- Avoid exhaust fumes from other vehicles.
- Meals: Have your child eat light meals before trips. Some children can just tolerate crackers and water.
- Plastic Bags: Always carry a ziplock plastic bag for vomiting emergencies.

8. Wrist Bands - Prevention:

- Acupressure bands (e.g., SeaBands) are helpful for some adults.
- There is no reason they shouldn't work for some children.
- Put them on before car trips or other causes of motion sickness.
- The pressure button goes over the center of the wrist. Place ½ inch (1 cm) above the wrist crease.

Call Your Doctor If

- Any symptoms last over 8 hours
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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