

Motion Sickness

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What is motion sickness?

Motion sickness is a condition that causes nausea and dizziness. It may happen to people when they are on a boat, in a car, on a carnival ride or in other moving vehicles.

What are the possible causes of this condition?

Motion sickness occurs when your body's sensory organs sends mixed or different messages to your brain

Movement is sensed by the brain and it receives signals from

- The inner ear, which provides information to the brain about movement, speed and gravity
- The eyes, which provides sight
- The muscles and joints, which senses the position of different body parts compared to other parts of the body

When the body is moved on purpose, for example when we walk, the signals received from the ear, eye and body tissues match what our brain senses.

However, when there is unintentional movement of the body, signals from the eye, ear and body tissues might not match each other. For example, imagine yourself inside the room of a moving ship. Your eyes do not sense movement, but your ears sense movement due to the motion of the ship. The difference in the signal that the eyes and ears send to the brain may cause motion sickness.

What are the symptoms of motion sickness?

The symptoms of this condition can include the following:

- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Increased saliva production
- Feeling warm
- Cold sweats
- Headache
- Pale skin
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Drowsiness

What can I do to treat motion sickness?

Motion sickness can be treated in the following ways and you can approach your pharmacist to get the following medications.

- Cinnarizine
- Dimenhydrinate
- Promethazine

These medications can also help to prevent motion sickness. In general, they work best if you take them at least 30 minutes before your journey.

When do I need to see a doctor?

Although motion sickness can be treated without a doctor's consultation, there are times where the condition might be more serious.

If your condition does not get better in 24 hours or gets worse, you should see a doctor.

You should also see a doctor if you experience any of the following:

- Nausea or vomiting that continues even after you leave the moving vehicle
- Symptoms of motion sickness that happens even when you are not in a moving vehicle
- Hearing loss
- Chest pain
- Signs of dehydration

What else can I do to manage this condition?

Other than using medications to treat the condition, motion sickness can also be managed by the following methods:

- You can try lying on your back, closing your eyes or looking at the horizon
- Ginger has been used traditionally to prevent motion sickness. However, ginger may increase the risk of bleeding, especially if you also take blood-thinners such as warfarin or aspirin, so check with your healthcare provider before using ginger supplements.
- You can try applying pressure at the P6 acupressure point on the inside of the wrist, either by applying pressure manually or with an acupressure wrist band. The P6 acupressure point is located three finger breadths below the wrist on the inner arm in between the two tendons (shown by the tip of the pen below).



The following are some suggestions to prevent motion sickness from happening again:

- Keep your eyes on the outside world while you are in a moving vehicle. This helps to match what you see, to the movement you are feeling, and makes you less likely to feel sick
 - If you are in a car or bus, sit in front and face forward
 - If you are on a boat, stay on the deck and look to the horizon.
 - If you are in a train or plane, choose window seats
- Avoid reading, looking at a screen, or looking at things close to you while you are inside a moving vehicle
- Stay hydrated by drinking water. Avoid alcohol or caffeinated drinks
- Eat small, frequent meals
- Breathe in fresh air
- Avoid smoking or smokers
- Use ginger supplements, such as ginger candy, ginger ale, candied or raw ginger

Disclaimers

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