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Motion Sickness



If your child becomes nauseated when traveling, she (he) has lots of company. More than half of all children have some motion sickness when riding in a car, a plane, a boat, or when playing video games or watching wide-screen movies.

Most common in children between the ages of 4 and 10, and more common in girls than boys, motion sickness can result in pale skin, vomiting, cold sweats or an unsteady gait. Although nobody knows for sure what causes motion sickness, it is believed to occur when the sensations we receive from our eyes and balance centers of the brain conflict with what the brain believes the actual position of the body should be.

Here are a few basic ways to prevent motion sickness:

- When traveling in a plane or on a boat, request seats in the center of the craft.
- Don't give a heavy meal within three hours of the trip, and avoid dairy and fatty foods.
- Have your child look out the front window of the car, not the side window.
- Increase the ventilation in the car.
- Make frequent rest stops.
- Don't have your child read or play video games while riding in a car

If all else fails, there are medications that can be used to prevent motion sickness. These are recommended for kids who have suffered from motion sickness in the past. Here are a few of these medications, all of which are available without prescription. The dosage recommended on the packages works well for these drugs, and the only common side effects are sleepiness and dry mouth.

- Dramamine: This is available as a liquid, a pill, and as a chewable tablet. Take it 30 minutes before traveling, and it can be repeated every 4 to 6 hours.
- Benadryl: This is available as a liquid and as a pill. Take it 1 hour before travel, and repeat, as needed, every 4 to 6 hours.
- Bonine: This is available as a pill and a chewable tablet. It lasts longer than other medications and therefore is only taken once, about 1 hour before a trip.

Certain herbal remedies have shown a modest benefit in preventing motion sickness. Ginger root (1,000 mg taken one hour before travel for adults and teenagers; 500 mg for children age 6 to 12; 125 mg for ages 3 to 6) is one remedy that is worth a try. Chamomile tea has given mixed results for motion sickness, but is worth a try.

Finally, in adults and teens who must travel often and who suffer with severe motion sickness, acupuncture may be helpful.



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