



Motion sickness

Five things you must know about it

For most people, motion sickness is just a mild annoyance. What many do not know is that motion sickness is a disturbance of the inner ear, and it has varying degrees. Moreover, many may not even know that they suffer from it, and some can be rendered totally out of action by motion sickness.

Find out some of the signs and symptoms, causes, triggers, preventive measures as well as treatments of motion sickness.

Common questions answered

1 HOW DO I KNOW IF I SUFFER FROM MOTION SICKNESS?

People who suffer from motion sickness commonly experience nausea, cold sweat, vomiting and dizziness. Other common signs and symptoms associated to it include headache, fatigue, increased salivation and paleness of skin.

If you experience one or two of the above every time you travel, you may be suffering from motion sickness. You don't have to worry, though, as there are ways to allay your discomfort.

2 WHAT CAUSES MOTION SICKNESS?

Motion sickness happens when the sense of balance is affected. It occurs when the nervous system receives conflicting signals from the inner ear, eyes, skin pressure receptors,

muscles and joint receptors. For example, in a flight cabin, you can feel and hear but do not see the motion. Hence, the brain cannot reconcile and coordinate. Similarly, this happens when you read a book on a train or in a car.

Lucky for some, the distressing symptoms of motion sickness stop when motion stops. However, there are people who continue to suffer the discomfort even after the journey.

Motion sickness can also be psychologically induced. Anticipation of movement can cause anxiety, fear and its symptoms. This is likely to occur to a person with previous experience of motion sickness.

3 WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TRIGGERS OF MOTION SICKNESS?

Different people are susceptible to different motion sickness triggers. Some experience it when riding a car, while others suffer dizziness in a poorly ventilated train cabin. Other common triggers include spending long hours in front of the computer, exposure to odour, and heightened level of fear or anxiety.



4 WHAT ARE THE PREVENTIVE MEASURES I CAN TAKE?

While it may be impossible to prevent all cases of motion sickness, there are some preventive measures you can take to soothe and allay the discomfort of motion sickness.

- Avoid indulgence of greasy and salty foods and alcohol.
- Have ample rest before a trip.
- Choose a seat with the least motion: the middle portion of an aircraft, the centre of a ship in the lower level cabins, or the front seat of a car.
- Face the direction of travel.
- Use head rest to minimise head movements.
- Maintain proper ventilation; open a vent or source if possible.
- Avoid reading or playing handheld games.
- Look at the view outside and keep gaze fixed at the far horizon.
- Try alternative methods such as wearing an acupressure wristband.
- Ginger soothes the stomach. Suck a ginger candy or take some ginger tea before travelling.

5 SHOULD I SEE A DOCTOR TO PREVENT MOTION SICKNESS?

There are medicines that treat and prevent nausea, vomiting and dizziness caused by motion sickness. These help calm the inner ear and are effective when taken before travel.

One such motion sickness medicine is by Xepa^{SP}. This medicine has anti-emetic properties and can be used for the prevention and treatment of nausea and vomiting – common symptoms of motion sickness.

Most people suffer motion sickness – knowingly or unknowingly. Understanding the five must-know things about this common disorder can help you handle your vacation or business trips with ease.

For more information about motion sickness, please seek advice from your doctor or pharmacist.

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