

Self Care Information for Patients: Travel Sickness

Summary

Travel sickness is caused by repeated movements when travelling, like going over bumps in a car or moving up and down in a boat.

The inner ear sends different signals to your brain from those your eyes are seeing. These confusing messages cause you to feel unwell.

Medication for travel sickness can be bought in a pharmacy or supermarkets without a prescription.

What can you do to help?

- Reduce motion. You can sit in the front of a car or in the middle of a boat.
- It may help to look straight ahead at a fixed point, such as the horizon.
- Do not read, watch films, or use electronic devices.
- Breathe fresh air, if possible. You can open a car window and also close your eyes and breathe slowly.
- Distract children by talking, listening to or singing songs.
- Avoid eating heavy meals before travelling.
- On long journeys, try breaking the journey to have some fresh air, drink some cold water and, if possible, take a short walk.
- Avoid strong smells, particularly petrol and diesel fumes. This may mean closing the window and turning on the air conditioning or avoiding the engine area in a boat.

When shall I see a General Practitioner (GP)?

If the sickness regularly persists after the journey.

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