

Motion Sickness in Children

Children usually feel sick in the stomach when travelling in a car, airplane, boat or train. This sickness is known as motion sickness. This sickness is caused by reception of wrong signals by eyes, muscles, skin receptors, and inner ears.

While travelling, different body parts send different signals to the brain. Eyes see things around and it sends signals about the direction of movement while in motion. The joint sensory receptors and muscles send signals about the movement of the muscles and the position in which the body is. The skin receptors send signals about the parts of the body which are in contact with the ground. The inner ears have a fluid in the semicircular canals. This fluid senses motion and the direction of motion like forward, backward, up, down, circular, or to and fro. When the brain gets timely reports from the various body parts, it tries to find a relation between all the signals and then sketches a picture about the body's movement and position at a particular instant. But when the brain isn't able to find a link and isn't able to draw a picture out of the received signals, the condition called motion sickness is experienced.

For example, if a child is riding in a car and reading something at the same time, the eyes will see stationary book. But the skin receptors and the inner ears will sense the body moving in a forward direction. The eyes and the muscle receptors will send signals that the body is not moving. This confuses the brain and everything is jumbled up in the head. This makes the child dizzy, sick in the stomach and even tired. There is a possibility of the child throwing up, so it is recommended that the parents carry a sick bag each time they are travelling with kids. And if the child is feeling anxious or scared, the condition can deteriorate further.

Although there are medicines available over the counter to deal with motion sickness, some measures should be taken to avoid medicine and also motion sickness. The child should always be made to sit facing in the forward direction. He/she should not face or sit backwards, nor should he be made to sit in a seat facing backwards. This helps the ears and the eyes to send similar kind of signal. It is good if the kid isn't involved in some kind of activity like reading, playing video games or something which is stationary. He/she must be asked to look outside, especially at things which are located at a distance. The same applies when travelling in an airplane. When travelling in a boat, the child can go to the upper deck and look at the horizon. Basically, the child must be made to concentrate at things which are located at a distance and are in motion. When looking at something stationary, the eyes get confused and send wrong signals.

It also helps to sit in a place which is moving the least. Usually, it is the center point of the body, so the more close the child sits to the center, the better. Like when in an airplane, it is good to sit in seats in the middle aisle and not in those which are located near the wings. If the child is sitting in the center of the boat, instead of the front or the side, the lesser seasick the child will feel. In spite of all these measures if the child is still feeling sick a doctor should be consulted. The doctor checks the inner ears for any defect. He will also check other body parts which are responsible for sensing motion. Apart from medicine, pressure bracelets are also available at the local pharmacy. And along with carrying a sick bag or any other plastic bag, the car can be pulled over and the child should be walked out a bit to feel better.

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