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Countering Car Sickness in Young Children

BY LISA MCELROY OF SUITELIVING.COM

The screen on my iPhone is broken.

OK, you're saying to yourself. I thought I was reading about car sickness in young children?

Yep. Exactly.

You see, a few weeks ago, Zoe (if you're a regular reader, you know she's my very boppy 11 year-old) got car sick. Like she always does. She happened to tell me in time to pull into a parking lot. Which she doesn't always. Seemed like a great thing. . . except that when I opened the door to get out and hold her hair while she barfed all over the parking lot, my iPhone fell off my lap and onto the hard asphalt.

And now the screen's broken.

Common in childhood, motion sickness mostly affects children between the ages of four and ten years old (but, as Zoe evidences, it can hit much older kids, too). Whoever's the victim, motion sickness is yucky – and the source (car, plane, boat, amusement park ride) doesn't really make a difference.

Motion sickness is caused when the brain receives conflicting messages about the environment from different parts of the body. In this case, there is a discrepancy between the messages received from the inner ear (the center for balance) and the eye. That's why some kids begin to feel queasy.

Zoe was miserable every time we got in the car. And that made me miserable. I needed some tips on car sickness remedies – fast. So I reached out to health care providers everywhere, and I was lucky enough to find [Lauren Feder, M.D.](#) She's a nationally recognized Los Angeles physician who specializes in primary care medicine, pediatrics, homeopathic medicine, holistic health, and natural parenting. She combines the "best of both worlds" – what we think of as "traditional" medicine and homeopathic remedies. She was even interviewed by Dr. Oz on Oprah and Friends recently! Thanks to Dr. Feder, Zoe's car sickness is (hopefully) a thing of the past.

Here's what Dr. Feder had to say:

So how to prevent it? According to Dr. Feder:

- Avoid reading while en route.
- Avoid large meals prior to travel; small snacks are preferable.
- Avoid the smell of gasoline, tobacco, or strong-smelling foods.
- Face forward in a car (for children over 20 lbs.) with a view of the horizon
- In a plane, sit over the wing, where the ride is less bumpy.
- Distract your child with music, song, or chat.
- Direct your child's gaze outside of the car.
- Try acupressure wristbands, which activate the acupuncture points known to relieve nausea and vomiting in many children and adults. The point is found approximately 3 fingerbreadths (about 2 inches) above the wrist crease in the middle of each inner



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forearm. Pressure or rubbing at that site is known to help motion sickness and other forms of nausea. As it is safe to use for children and carries no side effects, consider outfitting your children with an acupressure wristband that places pressure on this point.

- Be prepared: Keep an empty bag handy, just in case.

But even if you try all of these tips, your kids (like Zoe), may still get motion sick on occasion. If that happens:

Stop the activity. Get out of the car or off the boat or plane as soon as possible.

- Allow for fresh air.
- Place a cold washcloth on the face.
- Unbuckle the pants and loosen tight clothes.
- Lie the child down.
- Offer weak tea (peppermint tea and chamomile tea are especially good) and crackers to soothe the stomach.

Thanks, Dr. Feder! Now I just need to get a new phone . . .

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What item do you plan to bring on your next road trip to keep the kids entertained in the car?

- Coloring/Activity Book
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