



## ANIMAL ANTICS

### Note for Pet Owners:

*Pet Patrol 365 provides this information for educational purposes only. You should seek the advice of your veterinarian if your pet is ill, as only they can correctly advise on the diagnosis and the recommended treatment for your pet.*

## DOGS & MOTION SICKNESS

### What causes motion sickness?

The exact mechanisms which cause motion sickness are not fully understood. What we do know is that a combination of uncontrolled travel and stress or anxiety can produce very strong feelings of nausea and cause vomiting. Humans and dogs manage to balance thanks to a clever mechanism contained in the inner ear which sends signals to the brain. The movement caused by being in a car or at sea stimulates this mechanism which then bombards the brain with signals. These signals are made worse by stress (perhaps caused by previous bad experiences) and stimulate areas of the brain which cause nausea and then vomiting. Only when the movement stops will the nausea slowly subside as the brain activity returns to normal.

### Symptoms

Dogs that suffer with motion sickness may experience nausea, dizziness, hyper salivation (excessive drooling), panting, swallowing, lip-licking, restlessness, anxiety, trembling or even vomiting. In many cases, motion sickness can be defeated as the dog becomes more comfortable with travelling. But in other cases, the animal will continue to experience symptoms, making travel a traumatic experience for both dog and owner.

### Behavioural modification

Stress can also play a large part in motion sickness. Dogs quickly learn that car journeys are uncomfortable, so they may start to show signs of anxiety as soon as they realise that they are about to go in the car. Some may even vomit before the car is started or before they get into it. Here are some tips to get you started:-

1. First and foremost, it is important your dog associates car journeys with positive and good things. To do this, you need to acclimatise them slowly.
2. First, get your dog used to just being in the car, without it going anywhere. Every day, leave your dog in a well ventilated car for up to 30 minutes (building up slowly). Ensure your dog is comfortable and has a bed in which to sleep during this period.
3. Do this for a week and then start to do very short journey's (5-10 mins) with a really positive experience at the end of it - usually this would be a nice walk or a ball game. If your dog is sick during a journey, reduce the length of the journey such that it ends before they are sick. Build the journeys up again.
4. When your dog is able to do 30 minute journeys without stress, anxiety or sickness, you are pretty much there.
5. It's a good idea to have someone else in the car during these initial journeys. This person can soothe and distract your dog during the journey.
6. At the end of the return journey, create just as much fuss and play a short game.

### What can I do to make the car journey more comfortable?

1. You may want to make sure your dog has an empty stomach before getting in the car. Don't give him any food 3 to 4 hours prior to travel. Some vets also recommend limiting water intake just before travelling.
2. Allow your dog to relieve itself before travelling.
3. If you know your dog is prone to motion sickness, be sure to take it slow, and be extra careful around sharp curves or up and down hills.
4. Open the window a little; fresh air does wonders for animals that have a tendency to get motion sickness. Take note of the temperature; dogs cannot regulate their body temperatures as efficiently as humans can, so make sure it isn't too hot or too cold in the car.
5. Be prepared in case the dog gets queasy in the car. Cover the seats, bring towels, paper towels and bags, give a back seat dog plenty of air, play soothing music, and do not play music too loudly.
6. For long road trips, give yourself and your dog a rest stop and take a walk every two or three hours. Avoid dehydration and take a good travel bowl and allow them to have a drink during the break.

In addition to the measures mentioned above, you may want to consider giving your dog something natural to prevent motion sickness or alleviate symptoms. There are plenty of herbal and homeopathic remedies used to treat motion sickness and stress in dogs and these are:

Ginger (zingiber officinalis) • Mint, particularly the herb mentha piperita • Kalium phosphate • Pulsatilla vulgaris C30 • Coccus C30  
Aconite C30 • Bach Flower Rescue Remedy • PetAlive Easy Travel Solution • Johnston's Travel Eze

DAP (Dog Appeasing Pheromone) Collar or DAP Natural Spray which can either be sprayed into the car or onto a neckerchief for the dog to wear loosely around its neck whilst travelling

Supplies can be purchased through your local health food shop, homeopathic or conventional veterinarian or on-line.

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