

HOW DO YOU CONTROL MOTION SICKNESS?



I always take the front seat when travelling for a long distance. That way, I am able to see whether the car is taking a slope or making an incline and my body adjusts accordingly.
HARRIET ANENA, A WRITER



That queasy feeling is so uncomfortable. Each time I am travelling, I focus on one thing and avoid talking through the journey. Talking in-route seems to trigger the problem for me.
IRENE LANYERO, HAIRDRESSER



I dread when travelling. Although I do not vomit, the queasy feeling is really discomforting. When travelling, I eat orange flavoured sweets which help stop the queasy feeling.
JEROME OPIRA, STUDENT

Control motion sickness with a wristband

A number of people silently suffer from motion sickness since it is mostly believed that it cannot be controlled. Learn how a simple wristband can solve this problem for you

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Have you ever experienced the nauseating and stomach-turning sensation of motion sickness while travelling? If so, then you know that it can either hit abruptly, or at the most ill-timed moments.

According to a science website, motion sickness is a feeling a traveller gets when the movement he or she senses from the inner ears is different from the one they see. Depending on its cause, motion sickness is also known as carsickness (when the sufferer is travelling by a vehicle), sea sickness (when the subject is travelling by water), or airsickness (when the patient is aboard an airplane).

Whichever name it takes, or whatever the cause, motion sickness is characterised by a sense of discomfort, sweating, dizziness, shortness of breath, increased production of saliva, headache and vomiting.

Norbert Opiyo, a student at Makerere University, says he started experiencing motion sickness in 2011 while he was travelling from Gulu to Kampala. To ease his hunger pangs en-route, Opiyo packed his favourite snack of yoghurt and samosa. A few minutes after he started enjoying his snack, his attraction to the grub was turned into an everlasting nauseating feeling because, "suddenly, my neighbour vomited and laced my yoghurt and samosa with the contents of her stomach," he narrates.

"That incident disgusted me so much that I feel sick when travelling. Even at the mention of the word yoghurt, I feel queasy," he says. Opiyo is among the around 25 to 40 per cent of people who suffer from motion sickness, according to an on-line magazine, sciencenews.

Opiyo, and any other person who suffers from motion sickness can confirm that the condition always leaves one consumed with embarrassment, especially if it ends in vomiting. And yet, it is better to vomit and get quick relief even at the risk of getting rude stares from disgusted neighbours.

Common

Dr Alice Lamwaka, a lecturer at Gulu University, says one develops motion sickness when they are travelling, but cannot see the movement their body is feeling, or when they cannot feel the motion their eyes see. This opposing motion, she explains, sends varied signals to the brain, and the victim subsequently develops some feature of motion sickness. But the argument that motion sickness is related to sight is debatable, because Opiyo was born blind, and yet he suffers from it.

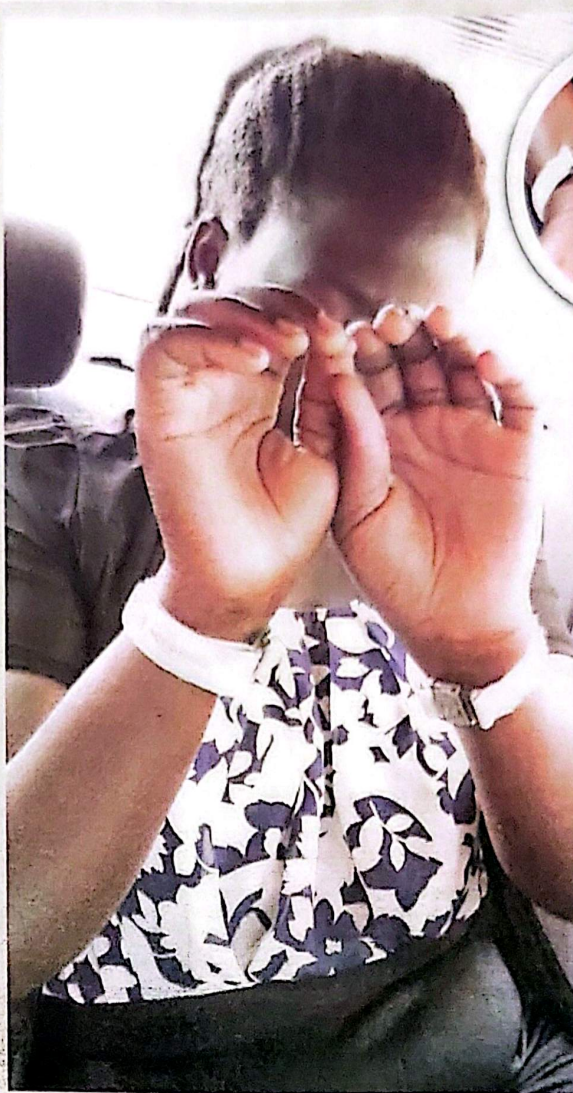
Dr Lamwaka says the anxiety of travelling a long distance also causes a person to suffer motion sickness, especially if they have experienced it before. This probably could mean its cause can be psychological.

Poor ventilation in the vehicle is also said to be a cause. This is because of a mixture of different fragrances from deodorants, sprays and perfumes, punctuated with sweat. This combination of smell makes the air stuffy, triggering motion sickness.

Dr Lamwaka adds that inability to see out of a window to aid orientation also triggers motion sickness, because a traveller would be unable to balance the motion in their eyes and ears.

Who is prone?

Children between the ages of 3-12 are believed to be most prone to the condition. Although expectant mothers and women experiencing their period are said to be disposed to motion sickness, almost everybody can experience the condition.



The wristband interrupts transmission of nausea before it is registered in the brain. PHOTOS BY CAROLINE AYUGI

OTHER REMEDIES

According to Dr Alice Lamwaka, a lecturer at Gulu University, people who suffer from motion sickness can chew carrots before they embark on a journey. "Carrots are infused with lots of vitamin A which is good for the eyes thus stabilising the central nervous system," she explains.

She advises those who suffer from the condition not to overindulge in eating and drinking immediately before embarking on a journey.

She also advises one to sit by the window to get fresh air, or in front of the vehicle so that there is coordination between the movements you see and the ones you sense in your ears to create a balance in the central nervous system.

Dr Alice Lamwaka, a lecturer at Gulu University, also advises those who suffer from motion sickness to get prescription for some over the counter medications that can control nausea and vomiting.

Using a wrist band

Norbert Opiyo, a student at Makerere University, now uses a motion sickness wristband. The wristband was given to him by his American friend, who saw him suffer each time he travelled.

The wristband uses acupuncture technology on the pressure point of the inner wrist, also known as pericardium 6 so that transmission of nausea is interrupted before it is registered in the brain.

According to *motion-sickness-guru.com*, an online portal, acupuncture is a prehistoric form of healing, where the

fingers and hands are used to exert pressure on certain key points of the body. The wristband, therefore, is said to work, when the small stud applies continuous pressure on the inner wrist.

For effectiveness, one is advised to make sure that the raised points on the bracelet are exactly on the P6 on both wrists.

Dr Alice Lamwaka, a lecturer at Gulu University, says the wristbands can be used to control motion sickness, since they have trace elements of minerals such as magnesium, silicon, copper and iron, which enter the body through the skin.

"When the minerals get into the blood stream, they cause many chemical

reactions, which in turn lead to a balance in the central nervous system," she explained.

Dr Lamwaka likened the wristband to the copper band, which was commonly used in the past by mothers to prevent scabies, chicken pox and tonsillitis in children. "In the past, children who were adorned with copper bands on the ankles never got scabies because of the anti bacterial effect copper has.

Besides, if a child developed tonsillitis, they were made to lick the copper band, and the infection would heal. It was not magic or a local belief, but copper indeed is an anti-bacterial," she adds.