

Motion Sickness in Dogs

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Motion Sickness in Dogs



Although we often think of dogs as happily lolling out the car window enjoying new scents, all pets are not alike. A car ride can equal an anxiety attack and shaking, drooling, and even vomiting for some dogs. And while some cats hide under the car seat, we know of one kitty who was perfectly content to lay on the dashboard and watch the world go by!

Although your pet may exhibit symptoms such as drooling or vomiting, this is not usually what humans experience as car or motion sickness, which is an inner ear problem. Although some pets can have inner ear motion sickness, your pet's fear of driving is probably caused by a combination of fear and lack of environmental control. To your pet, the car feels like a very noisy moving place that inundates him with all sorts of odors. He does not understand that he will be safe and sound somewhere after the car ride.

The following is an easy schedule to get your dog up to speed on auto travel:

- Is your pet used to the car? Pets are very receptive to repetition. Start by sitting in the car with your pet and a favorite treat. Make being in the car pleasant.
- Once your pet is no longer frightened by being in the car, turn it on so he can get used to the noise of the engine. Give a treat before you turn the car on and afterwards.
- Get your pet used to the car in motion. Back down to the end of the driveway and drive back up a few times. Remember to include praise and treats if he does not get frightened.
- Progress to short drives - around the block and then, on longer errands.

With this type of systematic progression, your pet should be used to driving by the time you get ready to leave on your longer trip. If your dog simply will not get settled, consider using [Drs. Foster & Smith Ultra-Calm®](#) or another pet-calming product like [Comfort Zone® Spray with Adaptil®](#) or [Rescue Remedy](#), all non-prescription products that will ease your pet's anxiety.