

## Dog or cat car sickness

Does your dog or cat throw up in the car when you go for a drive? Your beloved pet may be experiencing typical motion sickness, just like some people do. Motion sickness usually begins very shortly after movement in a car is initiated. If you have witnessed this before you may have noticed that the affected dog or cat will begin to drool/salivate at first, which ultimately leads to vomition. Looking at it from a clinical perspective, this is not considered a serious condition, but it is certainly not aesthetically appealing in any way and it is also something that we don't like to clean up afterwards.



In an ideal world all things should be prevented before they happen, but a lot of the time most pet owners are not aware that certain conditions can apply to animals, just like they do in humans. The best time to start is obviously when you first receive your puppy or kitten, but some pet owners only receive their pets when they are fully grown. Either way, we first try acclimatizing the pet to car rides by simply putting them in the car for a few minutes each day without going anywhere. With cats specifically, I always prefer to use a travelling crate/box, which is small, light and will keep them under control. Some dog owners opt for that too and have travelling crates for their dogs. Travel boxes are available in all shapes and sizes these days so it shouldn't be difficult to find one that matches your requirements. Once your pet has gotten used to simply sitting in the stationary vehicle for a little while, try just going down the driveway and back. Monitor their responses (write them down in a diary if you need to) and when they become more accepting of the experience without any ill effects, you can begin driving around the block. As you can see, we will gradually build up the distance and time the dog spends in a moving vehicle. The purpose of this approach is to decrease the pet's anxiety regarding been driven in a car and ultimately help to decrease vomiting.

Some animals, unfortunately, remain sensitive to motion sickness and may still vomit. In that instance, there are some over-the-counter medications you can try. The medication will need to be given about an hour before the trip (clearly, in cases of emergency or vomiting, this rule will have to be ignored). Ask your veterinarian for a recommendation as to what drug to try and the appropriate dosage for your pet. (Never give any medications to your pet without your veterinarian's guidance). These drugs are

generally very safe, with drowsiness most commonly being the only major side effect. Since your dog or cat will not be driving, that shouldn't be a problem. 😊



If over-the-counter drugs don't work, and it is really problematic for you and your pet discuss the option of your veterinarian doing house visits. It will most likely cost a little more, but will avoid a lot of discomfort for everyone involved.