



Key Issues You Need to Address

with regard to Seasickness

by Jeffrey S. Wisch, M.D

1. Prevention of Seasickness

- Be honest about your personal threshold to get sick
- Be well rested prior to going offshore
- Trial seasickness remedies before going offshore checking for side effects
- Start your choice of medication the night before sailing
- No alcohol the night before sailing
- Eat easily digestible foods the night before sailing and for first 24 hours
- Try to remain topside as much as possible when not getting rest for the first 24 hours
- Adhere to a strict watch schedule, and get plenty of sleep when off watch
- Stay well hydrated

2. If you start to feel sick

- Go topside and **attach your tether to the vessel**
- Let your watch captain know you feel sick, and inform them of any other personal illness
- If you are not taking any seasick medications, start immediately
- Try to focus on the horizon and if possible and appropriate take the helm
- Do not try to read or attempt close visual work
- Try hydrating slowly with an electrolyte solution such as Gatorade, Ginger ale or Coca Cola.
- Saltines may help settle your stomach
- **Stay attached to the vessel in the event that you need to vomit**
- If you need to vomit try to do so on the leeward side
- Crew mates should help secure the affected individual from going overboard

3. If you become seasick and have vomited

- Try using a rectal suppository such as Phenergan or Prochlorperazine
- If a suppository is not available, try a small sip of an electrolyte solution with a pill (Stugeron, Dramamine etc.)
- Try chewing the seasick pill and let the pieces melt in your mouth and under your tongue. This may help absorption into your system if pills are vomited up

- Apply a Scopolamine Patch if suppositories/pills are not available, or if you vomit the pills up. However take care so as not to overmedicate with pills and a patch
- Try to lay down, and if possible attempt to sleep in a secure place
- Do not try to take fluids or eat anything until you feel better and have given the medications a chance to work. (Usually within 30-60 minutes)
- When feeling better repeat some of the items in # 2
- Be reassured that most people improve within 24-48 hours

4. For Refractory Vomiting (uncontrollable; not responsive to treatment)

- Assess victim's condition
- If pulse is weak, **or** if the victim feels as if they will pass out upon sitting, **or** standing, **or** if there is a change in mental status, **then** may need to consider evacuation and should contact the Coast Guard
- While awaiting advice, keep the victim lying down in a secure place with head slightly elevated and turned to the side in the event that they vomit
- Do not force oral fluids
- Keep the victim warm
- Reassure the victim that you are getting help

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