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## **A fifth of motorists suffer nausea or sickness as a driver or passenger**

**Car sickness and nausea don't just affect children, new RAC research has found, with as many as one in five people (18%) – the equivalent of 7.3m people\* – not growing out of it and continuing to suffer as adults.**

Those embarking on half-term car trips should be warned that sitting in the back seat of a car appears to be the worst place for motion sickness, with 75% of present sufferers saying that is the main place they feel queasy. Twelve per cent of those surveyed say being a front seat passenger brings on the unpleasant feelings, while for one in 20 it's either driving or being a passenger that makes them feel unwell. Seven per cent say there is no pattern to their motion sickness.

The top reason people gave for feeling sick is reading in the car (61%), followed by using a tablet or phone (50%) – clearly things that should never be attempted as a driver. Nearly four in 10 (37%) blame winding country roads while a third (32%) say it's a lack of fresh air that causes them to feel nauseous – with a similar proportion (30%) saying simply not looking out of the window can trigger the feeling.

More than a third of drivers (37%) say they have even had to take a break as a result of someone feeling unwell in the car, with 2% having to abandon journeys or even avoid them altogether.

While the vast majority of past and present sufferers (48%) have never sought medical help for motion sickness, more than one in 10 (13%) have either used over-the-counter medicine or an alternative remedy like using travel bands or eating ginger to try to alleviate the unpleasant symptoms. A desperate 2% meanwhile have turned to their doctor for help.

But a significant proportion (24%) say they have their own means of coping with the feeling of nausea, and rely on closing their eyes, trying to sleep or focusing intently on the horizon in order to feel better.

RAC spokesperson Rod Dennis said: “While car sickness is often associated with younger children, our research suggests it still remains a problem for a substantial number of older drivers and passengers.

“While people suffer from sickness to different degrees, there is a lot passengers in particular can do to reduce the chances of feeling unwell while on the move. Top of the list has to be cutting out reading a book or browsing a phone or tablet while a car is in motion, and using the well-known technique of looking out of the window and fixing on the horizon can be very effective in alleviating a sick feeling. But improving the in-car environment by ensuring plenty of fresh, and ideally cooling air is flowing can also help enormously – especially for people who sit in the rear seats on a long journey.

“A smoother driving style can also pay dividends – even if a driver doesn’t suffer sickness themselves, they could suffer some unfortunate consequences if they cause any of their passengers to become unwell simply because they are accelerating or braking too sharply. Driving too fast on windy country roads could be the perfect recipe to make other occupants feel queasy and could even lead to having to do a thorough deep-clean of the upholstery and carpet.

“Interestingly, our research also found that a small proportion (3%) of drivers say they suffer from potentially-debilitating migraines while in the car – something we would suggest sufferers talk to their GP about.”

The RAC research also found that nearly a quarter drivers (24%) said that they used to suffer from car sickness, but later grew out of the condition.

### **Top tips for avoiding car sickness this half term**

**Ditch the devices:** If you're travelling with children, it can be appealing to give them a tablet or phone to keep them occupied on a long journey – but they are much more likely to feel unwell if you do. Try some games that mean they need to keep looking out of the window, like I-Spy or Pub Cricket

**Keep the air flowing:** A quarter of current car sickness sufferers say it is a car being too hot and stuffy that makes them feel unwell. Use air conditioning, or keep the windows open, to create a better in-car environment for everyone

**Have a light meal before travelling:** A lack of food, as well as too much of it, can lead to car sickness so try to ensure you and your passengers set off with something in your stomachs

**Drive smoothly, especially on country roads:** Drive with a light right foot, braking and accelerating smoothly, to keep things comfortable for your passengers

**Try to avoid winding routes:** Where it's possible, consider driving on wider, straighter roads that give all your occupants a good view of the horizon

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### **Notes to Editors**

\* Research conducted among 1,990 UK drivers on the RAC Driver Opinion Panel. 7.3m figure obtained by extrapolating based on there being 40.46m full driving licence holders (DVLA table DRL0101)

### **About the RAC**

First formed in 1897, the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members and championing the interests of drivers for more than 120 years.

Today it has more than eight million members and is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's [roadside assistance](#), [insurance](#), [buying a used car](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#) – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of

its members and UK drivers at a national level. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – is one of a kind and provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#). It provides a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump - and tracks these prices daily to help drivers check if the price they pay to fill up is a fair one.

## Contacts



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