

"Fasten your seat belts. It's going to be a bumpy night!" The famed line is from "All About Eve," spoken in her gritty style by the great Bette Davis. Of course, she wasn't talking about airplane flights, but more likely commenting on some flighty Hollywood love triangle.

However, remembering her line when your airplane is bouncing all over the sky may give you a bit of comfort. Just follow the first simple rule. Keep your seatbelt fastened tightly when the flight gets bumpy.

I've been on many up and down flights, both as an airline customer and in my younger days as a crewman or hitch-a-ride passenger on all kinds of Navy aircraft. I was only air sick once, and for a good reason. The old PBY flying boat was bouncing all over the winter sky like a moth caught in a wind storm.

Before the flight, I had eaten a big fried chicken lunch, topped off with two bottles of beer. I lost it all. After we landed, the Navy pilot made me swab up the gun bubble I had soiled. It taught me a lesson: don't drink or eat before you fly bumpy. It never happened again.

If you have a history of motion sickness, be sure to check with your doctor before your next flight. Medication can often help ease the sickness and anxiety that often helps to cause it. Another bit of advice is to eat sparingly and simply for the 24 hours before your flight, so your stomach will be more able to withstand the constant swaying motions and sudden jerks of a bumpy flight.

I don't advise booze. Maybe one drink could have a calming effect for some people. However, almost every case of a fellow passenger losing his cookies too close to me during flight, invariably involved his/her loading up at the airport bar before boarding. Go easy on the booze, especially if you'll be sitting near me.

The same abstinence applies if you're traveling with other sensitive souls, such as a very old person, a child or a baby. On a recent flight, my spouse stroked the cheek of a cute little one who was nervously slurping a bottle next to her. Although milk is more gentle than booze, a sudden patch of bumpy air can give it the same upchuck power. It cost \$25 to get my spouse's clothing cleaned after we landed.

Other advice could be of help to some people, particularly those who fear flying, the white knuckle squad who will be struck with terror every time the airplane lurches a bit. In two words: cool it! If you're a nervous flyer, keep that seat belt tight and do something to keep you busy.

Read a book, listen to music, watch a DVD player or use one of those new doohickies that play movies, games, the internet, music and all kinds of interesting things. Just make sure the movie you watch isn't about airliner crashes. I always take along stacks of crossword puzzles, and they help me ignore the rough moments and pass the time. Finding busy things to do on a laptop is also effective.

The main secrets of dealing with air turbulence are a positive attitude, keeping busy, moderation

in food and drink, and something to keep your mind busy during the flight. Of course, always keep an eyeball on that little barf bag, just in case. I may be sitting next to you.