



He's a killer.

Heatstroke Deaths Are Completely Preventable

It's that time of year for some fun in the sun as summer heats up and families head outdoors or on vacation to look for ways to cool off.

But with these rising summer temperatures also comes a dangerous and potentially deadly situation for many of our children—heatstroke deaths in hot motor vehicles. In fact, such deaths are the number one cause of not-in-traffic non-crash related deaths among children 14 and younger.

Most people don't realize that a child's body temperature can rise up to five times faster than an adult's. Heatstroke begins when the core body temperature reaches around 104 degrees; death can follow in a child when that temperature reaches 107 degrees.

Even with moderate temperatures, the inside of a car can heat up to well above 110 degrees in minutes. But with summer upon us, and daytime temps in many areas across the country shooting well above 90, vehicles will heat up even faster.

That makes it very important to know the risks and consequences associated with leaving kids in cars—especially hot cars—because tragedies can and do happen.

In fact, from 1998-2016, 700 children across the nation died due to heatstroke in a hot vehicle. Just as tragic, over half (54 percent) of the child heatstroke deaths were because the child was forgotten in the vehicle by a distracted parent or caregiver.

No parent ever thinks they'll forget their baby or child in the car, but even a great parent can forget a sleeping child in the back seat. And part-time caregivers who are unaccustomed to regularly transporting the child can be especially prone to forgetting.

That's why all adults should always remember, "Look Before You Lock" to make sure there are no children left in the vehicle. Some other simple reminders include:

- Write a reminder note about the child and put it on the car door or dash to see it when you leave the vehicle;





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- Set a reminder on your cell phone to alert you to check that you dropped your child off at daycare;
- Place a purse, briefcase, or cell phone, in the back next to the car seat to remind yourself that your child is in the car;
- Keep a familiar object in your child's safety seat, such as a stuffed toy, so when you remove it after buckling up your child, you can place the object in the front seat as a reminder to always check the back for your child;
- Never let kids play in an unattended vehicle or leave a child alone in a car, even if you leave the windows partly open or the air conditioning on—even for just a few minutes.

If you are not a parent or caregiver, you also have an important role to play. If you happen to see a child alone in a hot vehicle, make sure the child is okay and responsive. If the child appears okay, quickly do everything you can to locate the parents.

But if the child is not responsive and appears in distress, call 911 immediately and follow their directions. When the child is out, cool the child rapidly (not an ice bath, but by spraying them with cool water).

Sometimes bystanders are reluctant to get involved, and surveys suggest 63 percent of adults just assume the parents will be right back. But what if they aren't?

Bystanders should know that States have "Good Samaritan" laws that protect them from lawsuits for getting involved to help a person in an emergency. So if you happen to pass by and see a child alone in a hot car, do not hesitate. Please act!

We need parents, caregivers and bystanders working together to help end these tragic heatstroke deaths—because kids and hot cars don't mix.