

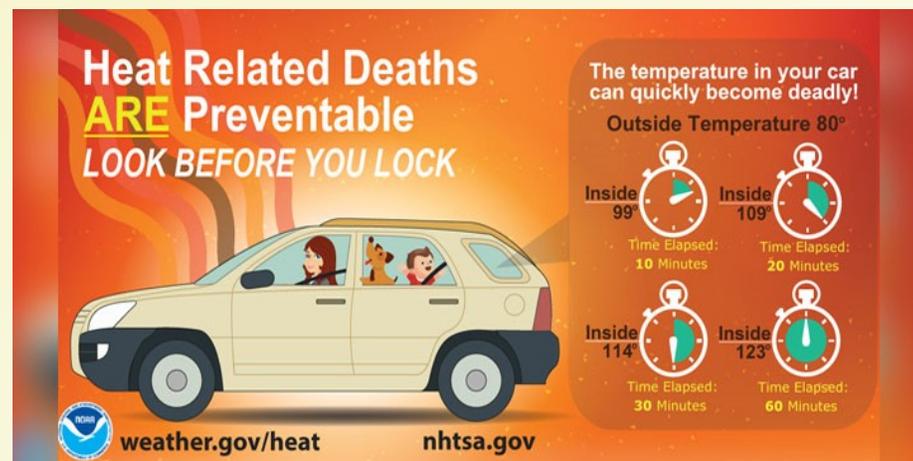
# Leaving Children Alone in Hot Cars — Know the Risks and Consequences

## Prevent Vehicle Related Heatstroke!

As outside temperatures rise, the dangers for children being seriously injured or even dying from being left alone inside a hot car also rise. Heatstroke begins when the core body temperature reaches about 104 degrees and the thermoregulatory system is overwhelmed. Children and Hot Cars are a Deadly Combination!

Vehicles heat up quickly - even with a window rolled down two inches, if the outside temperature is in the low 80s° Fahrenheit, the temperature inside a vehicle can reach deadly levels in only 10 minutes. Children's bodies overheat easily, and infants and children under four years of age are among those at greatest risk for heat-related illness.

Children's bodies absorb more heat on a hot day than an adult. Also, children are less able to lower their body heat by sweating. When a body cannot sweat enough, the body temperature rises rapidly. In fact, when left in a hot vehicle, a young child's body temperature may increase three to five times as fast as an adult. High body temperatures can cause permanent injury or even death.

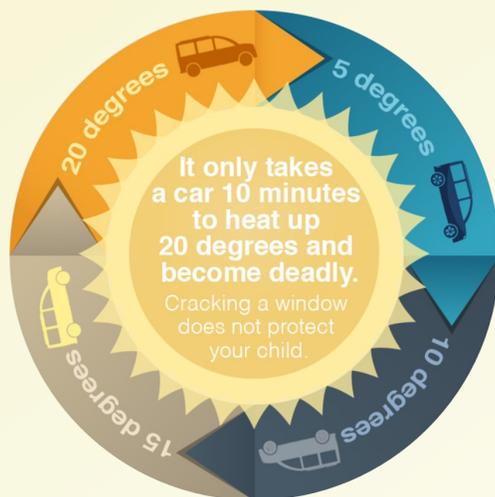


### Risks

- ◆ In 10 minutes, a car can heat up **20 degrees Fahrenheit**.
- ◆ Cracking a window **does little to keep the car cool**.
- ◆ With temperatures in the 60s, your car can heat up to **well above 110 degrees**.
- ◆ A child's body temperature can rise up to **five times faster** than an adult's.
- ◆ Heatstroke can happen when the temperature is **as low as 57 degrees outside!**
- ◆ A child dies when his/her temperature **reaches 107**.

### Warning signs of heatstroke include:

- ◆ Red, hot, and moist or dry skin
- ◆ No sweating
- ◆ Strong rapid pulse or slow weak pulse
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Confusion, or acting strangely.



**If a child exhibits any of these signs after being in a hot vehicle, cool the child rapidly (not an ice bath but by spraying them with cool water). Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.**

### Prevention Tips to Avoid a Tragic Heatstroke

- ◆ **ALWAYS LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK!**
- ◆ Always check the back seat before you lock the vehicle and walk away.
- ◆ Get in the habit of always opening the back door to check the back seat before leaving your vehicle.
- ◆ Create a reminder to check the back seat. Put something you'll need like your cell phone, handbag, employee ID or brief case, etc., in the back seat so that you have to open the back door to retrieve that item every time you park.
- ◆ Keep a large stuffed animal in the child's car seat. When the child is placed in the car seat, put the stuffed animal in the front passenger seat. It's a visual reminder that the child is in the back seat.
- ◆ Make sure you have a strict policy in place with your childcare provider about morning drop-off. If your child will not be attending childcare as scheduled, it is the parent's responsibility to call and inform the childcare provider. If the child does not show up as scheduled, and a call was not received from the parent, the childcare provider pledges to contact you immediately to ensure the safety of your child.
- ◆ If someone else is driving your child, or your daily routine is altered, always check to make sure your child has arrived safely.
- ◆ Never leave a child alone in a car.
- ◆ Never let your children play in an unattended vehicle. Teach them that a vehicle is not a play area.
- ◆ Never leave a child in a parked vehicle, even if the windows are partially open.
- ◆ **Observe and Report:** If you see a child alone in a car, call 911, especially on warm days!



# Safe Summer Tips In and Around Cars

## Seat Belt Entanglement



A child within reach of a seat belt may become entangled if the seat belt is pulled all the way out from the retractor and then wrapped around the head, neck, or waist. Many seat belts have a locking mechanism, when activated the seat belt

**only gets shorter**, preventing the child from removing the seat belt and creating the possibility that the child can be strangled. The locking feature is designed for car seat installation.

Car seats installed with the vehicle's Lower Anchors and Tether for Children (LATCH) system may make the unused seat belt easy to reach for the child. For car seats installed with LATCH, consider buckling shoulder belts with switchable retractors prior to installation, as long as this does not interfere with the installation with the lower anchors and is allowed by the car seat and vehicle manufacturers' instructions.

Consider buckling unused shoulder belts with switchable retractors in adjacent seating positions. Be certain to switch the retractors to the locking mode.

An older child who is no longer in a car seat may become entangled in the seat belt if the child is not correctly seated in the vehicle and not properly secured. A child who lies down or sleeps on the vehicle seat or plays with an unused seat belt can accidentally pull the seat belt out and activate the locking mechanism and become entangled.

### Prevention Tips

- ◆ Do not let children play in or around cars.
- ◆ Never leave a child unattended in or around a vehicle.
- ◆ Always ensure children are properly restrained.
- ◆ Teach children that seat belts are not toys.
- ◆ Be aware that some seat belts have a retractor that locks if pulled all the way out.
- ◆ If a child has an unused seat belt within reach:
  - ◆ Buckle unused seat belts. Pull the seat belt out all the way to the end without yanking. Then, feed the excess webbing back into the retractor.
  - ◆ If a car seat is installed with LATCH, consider completing the steps above before you install the child seat. Always consult your child seat and vehicle owner's manual for installation instructions.

## Trunk Entrapment

Children are naturally curious and love to explore their surroundings. Unattended children in or near a vehicle are likely to begin playing in it. Hide and seek can turn deadly if they get trapped in the trunk, where temperatures can rise very quickly - resulting in heatstroke or asphyxiation.

### Prevention Tips

- ◆ Teach children that vehicle trunks are for cargo, not for playing.
- ◆ Always supervise your children carefully when in and around vehicles.
- ◆ Check the trunk right away if your child is missing.
- ◆ Lock your car doors and trunk. Be sure keys and remote entry devices are out of reach of children.
- ◆ Keep the rear fold-down seats up and locked to prevent children from climbing into the trunk from inside the car.

As of September 1, 2001, auto manufacturers were required to equip all new vehicle trunks with a 'glow in the dark' trunk release inside the trunk compartment. Show your kids how to use the release in case of an emergency. If your car is older and does not have the 'glow in the dark' trunk release, ask your automobile dealership about getting your vehicle retrofitted with a trunk release mechanism.

### What You Need To Know, Now.

- ◆ Younger children are more sensitive to heat than older children and adults, and are at greater risk for heatstroke.
- ◆ High temperature, humidity and poor ventilation create an extremely dangerous environment in a vehicle trunk.
- ◆ Check the trunk right away if your child is missing.



## Power Windows

Children can hurt themselves with power windows. Many kids are injured when a window closes on their finger, wrist, or hand. Some kids have been strangled by power windows.

### Prevention Tips

- ◆ Never leave your children alone in a vehicle for any reason.
- ◆ Teach your children not to play with window switches.
- ◆ Teach your children not to stand on passenger door arm rests.
- ◆ Properly restrain your children in car seats or seat belts to prevent them from accidentally activating power windows and sunroofs.
- ◆ Look and make sure your children's hands, feet, and head, are clear of windows before raising the windows.
- ◆ Never leave the key in the ignition or in the "on" or "accessory" position when you walk away from the car.
- ◆ If available, activate the power window lock switch so that your children cannot play with the windows.



### What You Need To Know, Now.

- ◆ All new vehicles will have "pull to close" switches, which require you to pull up on them to close the window. Older vehicles may have window switches that a child can accidentally step or put weight on, easily causing a window to close.
- ◆ Some vehicles have power windows that automatically reverse when an object (such as your child's arm or neck) is in the path of a closing window.