

Keeping Children Warm & Safe Through Winter



The Danger of Winter Coats in Car Seats

As cooler weather approaches, parents bundle children in bulky coats to keep them warm. Using these thick coats may keep children warm, but they reduce the safety of the car seat. The car seat harness keeps the child in the car seat and provides the best protection when correctly placed on the child and tightened snugly. A bulky coat can create slack in the harness during a crash.

To determine if the child's coat is too bulky and not safe to use under the harness while traveling in the car:



1. Put the coat on the child and correctly place the car seat harness on the child's body.
 - Buckle the harness and adjust snugly to fit the child. A snug harness does not allow the webbing to be folded between your thumb and forefinger when pinched at the shoulder.
2. Without loosening the harness, unbuckle and remove the child from the car seat.
3. Remove the coat and place the child back in the car seat. Correctly place the harness on the child's body and buckle the harness straps. If you can pinch the webbing between your thumb and forefinger, the coat is too bulky to be worn under the harness.



Keeping Children Warm in Car Seats

- Warm up the vehicle in a well-ventilated area before securing the child in the car.
- Purchase coats that come in layers or offer warmth with thinner fabrics and fillers.
- Place a blanket over the child who is secured in a car seat for additional warmth.



Put the child's coat on backwards once the harness is buckled and tightened.

- Secure the child in the car without their winter coat.
- Buckle and tighten the harness snugly.
 - A snug harness does not allow any slack.
 - The harness should be snug enough on the child that you cannot pinch any extra webbing.
- Slip the child's arms through the sleeves to wear the coat backwards and over the snug harness.
- In the event of a crash, the snug harness will keep the child secure in the car seat.



Note: A common misuse for car seats is a loose harness. Wearing a bulky winter coat under the harness is just one of the causes for a loose harness. Extra slack in the harness can be very dangerous; it can lead to too much movement or even ejection during a crash.

Follow Manufacturer's Instructions

Install the child's car seat correctly to reduce the risk of injury in a crash. Always follow the car seat instructions and vehicle manual guidance to achieve a correct installation. Useful tips to obtain a correct installation:

- Read the car seat instruction manual and the portion of your vehicle owner's manual covering car seat installation.
- Place the car seat in a back seat of the vehicle and secure tightly. It should not move side-to-side or front-to-back more than 1-inch when pulled at the belt path.

Secure Children Correctly In the Car Seat

Properly position the harness on your child. The harness straps should lie flat.

- **Rear-facing:** Thread the harness straps through the slot that is **at or below** your child's shoulders.
- **Forward-facing:** Thread the harness straps through a **reinforced slot** that is **at or above** your child's shoulders.



- Buckle the harness and tighten until it is snug on the child.
- The harness is snug when the webbing cannot be pinched at the shoulder.
- Place the harness chest clip at armpit level.

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

Prevent Vehicle Related Heatstroke!

As outside temperatures rise, the danger for children being seriously injured or even dying from being left alone inside a hot car also rises. No one thinks they could forget a child in their vehicle, but these tragedies happen. Heatstroke begins when the core body temperature reaches about 104 degrees and the ability to maintain or control body temperature is overwhelmed.

Children and Hot Cars are a Deadly Combination!

Vehicles heat up quickly and children's bodies overheat easily. Children's bodies absorb more heat on a hot day than an adult, and children are less able to lower their body heat by sweating. When a body cannot sweat enough, the body temperature rises rapidly.

Infants and children under four years of age are among those at greatest risk for heat-related illness.

High body temperatures can cause permanent injury or even death.

Estimated Vehicle Interior Air Temperature v. Elapsed Time

ELAPSED TIME	OUTSIDE Air Temperature					
	70	75	80	85	90	95
0 minutes	70	75	80	85	90	95
10 minutes	89	94	99	104	109	114
20 minutes	99	104	109	114	119	124
30 minutes	104	109	114	119	124	129
40 minutes	108	113	118	123	128	133
50 minutes	111	116	121	126	131	136
60 minutes	113	118	123	128	133	138

Courtesy Jan Null, CCM; Department of Meteorology & Climate Science, San Jose State University

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 body temperature.
- Heatstroke can happen when the temperature is as low as 57 degrees outside!
- A child dies when his/her temperature reaches 107 degrees.



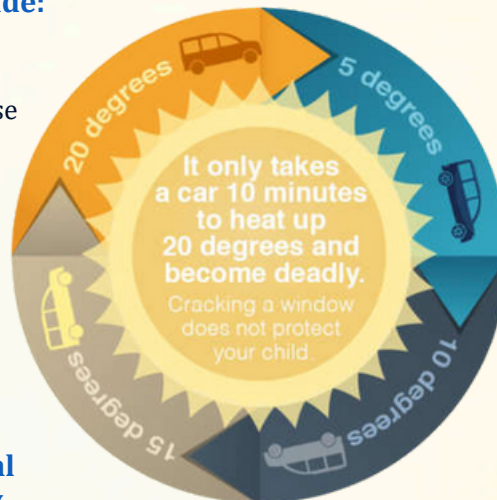
Warning signs of heatstroke include:

- 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.

Do Not place child in an ice bath, but spray the child with cool water.

Take Action: Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately



Prevention Tips to Avoid a Tragic Heatstroke

- **ALWAYS LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK! Never Leave a child alone in a car, even if the windows are open.**
- Get in the habit of looking in the back seat before locking the vehicle and walking away.
- Put something in the back seat, like your cell phone, bag, or briefcase, etc., to create a reminder to open the back door.
- Distractions and/or a change in routine increase the risk of forgetting a child in a back seat.
 - If someone else is driving your child, or your daily routine is altered, always check to make sure your child arrived safely.
- Have an agreement in place with the childcare provider about morning drop-off.
 - If your child will not be attending childcare as scheduled, the parent's responsibility is to call and inform the childcare provider.
 - If the child does not show up as scheduled, and the child care provider did not receive a call, the childcare provider pledges to contact the parent immediately to ensure the safety of the child.
- Never let children play in an unattended vehicle. Teach children that a vehicle is not a play area.
- **Observe and Report: If you see a child alone in a car, call 911, especially on warm days!**

