

Remembering to Look Back

With Summer in full swing, it is time to reflect upon safety practices and environment circumstances that can increase the likelihood or help prevent the likelihood of child heat related deaths. With warmer ambient temperatures, we have to be cognizant of a child sitting unattended in the back of a hot car.

The inside of a vehicle heats up very rapidly. Even when the windows are cracked, the temperature can reach 125 degrees in minutes. A child's body is more sensitive to heat and can increase 3-5 times faster than an adult. Unfortunately, there have been many tragedies where a child is left in an unattended car during hot weather. The average child heat stroke fatality between 1990 and 2016, is 37 each year. That is one child dying every 9 days, with the majority being under 1 years old.

Heatstroke begins when the core body temperature is around 104 degrees. When it reaches 107 degrees, it is lethal. The outside temperature can be 60 degrees and the temperature in your car can reach 110 degrees. Pets and elderly are also sensitive to heat.

Please note the following warning signs of heat related stress/illnesses:

- Red, hot, moist or dry skin
- No sweating
- Headache
- Rapid or slow pulse
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Grouchy or acting out of the ordinary

All too often, adults get distracted and leave their child in a hot car. Fatigue, stress, lack of sleep, changes in a daily routine are all contributing factors. Many good care takers/parents can forget their child in the car if they are distracted. Here are some ideas to prevent this from occurring:

- Put something important like your purse or wallet in the back seat, so that you don't forget to look in the back seat.
- Leave a stuffed animal in the child seat and when you put the child in the seat, put the stuffed animal up front with you as a visual reminder.
- Make it a habit to look in the back seat when you get out of your car, even if you think the child isn't back there.
- There are alarm systems now that can be installed in the car as a reminder to remember when your child is in the back seat.

NHTSA