

LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK!



Pike County Health Department
Home Health & Hospice



Think it can't happen to you ... Think again!

Brought to you by Pike County Health Department, Home Health and Hospice

Mika was only 6 months old when she died from heat stroke after being left in a vehicle. Mika's father dropped off her sister at school, but Mika fell asleep in her rear-facing car seat while her dad was distracted by a phone call with news of a possible job after having been laid off weeks before. The road he normally took was blocked so he had to take a detour. He stopped at the post office where he ran into a friend he'd been helping with a project at church. He then drove to the church, not realizing until later that day, he never dropped Mika off at day care. When Mika was found, it was too late.

On average, 38 children die in hot cars each year from heat related deaths after being trapped inside a motor vehicle. Even the best of parents or caregivers can unknowingly leave a sleeping baby in a car, and the end result can be injury or even death. Between 1990 and 2016 the number of child vehicular heat stroke deaths in the US was 793, with 20 of them being in Missouri. 87% of children who have died from vehicular heat stroke are age 3 and younger.

Facts show new parents suffer from exhaustion due to lack of sleep, hormone changes, stress, and changes in their normal routine. Any one of these changes can cause your memory to fail at a time you least expect it.

Children have died in hot cars when the outside temperature was as low as 60 degrees. A child's body temperature overheats 3-5 times faster than an adult body. Cracking the windows does NOT help slow the heating process or decrease the maximum temperature. The inside of a vehicle heats up very quickly. Even with the windows cracked, the temperature inside a car can reach 125 degrees in minutes. Two-thirds of the increase in temperature happens in the first 20 minutes.

Planning can help keep your child from being hurt. Follow these safety tips:

- Never leave children alone in or around cars – not even for a minute.
- Make it a routine to open the back door of your car every time you park to check that no one has been left behind.
- Put something in the back seat to remind you to open the back door every time you park – cell phone, employee badge, handbag, brief case, etc.
- Keep a stuffed animal in baby's car seat. Place it in the front seat as a reminder when baby is in the back seat.
- Ask your babysitter or child care provider to call you if your child hasn't arrived as scheduled.
- Make sure children cannot get into a parked car.
- Keep vehicles locked at all times, even in the garage or driveway. Ask home visitors, child care providers and neighbors to do the same.
- Keys and remote openers should never be left within reach of children.
- If a child goes missing, immediately check the inside passenger compartments and trunks of all vehicles in the area very carefully, even if they are locked. A child may lock the car doors after entering a vehicle on their own, but may not be able to unlock them.
- If you see a child alone in a vehicle, get involved. Call 911 immediately. If the child seems hot or sick, get them out of the vehicle as quickly as possible.
- Be especially careful during busy times, schedule changes, and periods of crisis or holidays. This is when many tragedies occur.
- Use drive-thru services when available – restaurants, banks, pharmacies, dry cleaners, etc. and pay for gas at the pump.

Please share these important safety tips with your child care providers, teachers, relatives, friends, family and neighbors ... it could save a precious life!

For more information go to www.kidsandcars.org.