Frequently Asked Questions

Q:  What  is  heatstroke?

A: Heatstroke, also known as hyperthermia, occurs when the body isn’t able to cool itself quickly enough and the body temperature rises to dangerous levels.

Q:  What  are  symptoms  of  heat stroke?

A:  Symptoms may include dizziness; disorientation; agitation; confusion; sluggishness; seizure; hot, dry skin that is flushed but not sweaty; loss of consciousness; rapid heartbeat or hallucinations.

Q: Why are children at greater risk of heatstroke if left alone in cars?

A: A child’s body heats up three to five times faster than an adult’s. When a child’s temperature reaches 104 degrees, major organs start to shut down. When it reaches 107 degrees, a child can die.

Q:  How long does it take for a car to heat up?

A: In just 10 minutes a car can heat up 19 degrees. On an 80 degree day, the inside of a closed car can quickly exceed 100 degrees. Cracking a window open doesn’t help.

Q: How many children die from heatstroke?

A: Since 1998, at least 605 children across the United States have died from heatstroke when unattended in vehicle. Every 10 days in the United States a child dies when alone in a hot car, and for every child who dies, hundreds more are rescued.

Q:  In what ways are children left unattended in a vehicle?

A:   Heatstroke deaths among children happen in three ways:

* 52% - child “forgotten" by caregiver
* 29% - child playing unattended in a vehicle
* 18% - child intentionally left in vehicle by adult

Q:  What  should  parents and caregivers do to protect kids from  heatstroke?

A: Safe Kids is asking everyone to help protect kids from this preventable tragedy by remembering to ACT.

* A: Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you’re not in it so kids don’t get in on their own.
* C: Create reminders by putting something in the back of your car next to your child such as a briefcase, a purse or a cell phone that is needed at your final destination. This is especially important if you’re not following your normal routine.
* T: Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations. One call could save a life.

Q:  Are  there  laws  about  heatstroke?

A: Yes, 20 states have laws, but each state law is different. Some states may consider this action to be felony child neglect if a child is injured or killed. It is never safe for a child to be alone in a car. This happens to people of all races, social classes and professions. It can happen to you.

Q:  What should I do if I see a child alone in a car?

A: The best thing you can do is to call 911 (EMS) immediately. EMS personnel are trained to assess a situation and determine if the child is in danger. Alert the 911 operator and follow directions.

Q:  What  is  meant  by  the  term  “near  miss?”

A: A near miss describes a child who is alone in a car and is rescued before the situation becomes fatal. This does not include situations where a child gets locked inside of a car but has a caregiver outside, seeking immediate help. For every child who dies after being left alone in a hot car, hundreds more are near misses.

Q: How do young children gain entry to a car?

A: Many kids get into a car through the trunk or open doors. Parents should make sure to lock your vehicles, including doors and trunks, when you’re not using it. Keep keys and key fobs out of children’s reach. If a child is missing, get help and check swimming pools, vehicles and trunks.

Q: What  can  I  do  to  help spread the word in my community?

A: Take action against heatstroke by sharing our [activist toolkit](http://www.safekids.org/take-action-prevent-heatstroke) with friends, family and your community. Share our tip sheet, poster, and social media guide for posting on Facebook and Twitter.

Q. How is the Never Leave Your Child Alone in a Car program supported?

A. Safe Kids created Never Leave Your Child Alone in a Car (NLYCAC) as part of its Buckle Up program, a national initiative supported by the General Motors Foundation to keep children and families safe in and around cars.