

Children dying in hot cars: 3 ways to prevent tragedy

[Laura Larsen](#) posted: June 5, 2013, 8:00 am in: [Baby, Toddler, Checklists, Tips & Tricks](#)



According to NBC News, eight children so far this spring have [died after being trapped in hot cars](#). Seven of these deaths were in May of this year alone.

It's a tragedy we hear about every summer. As the article indicates, "Most deaths occurred when otherwise well-meaning parents or caregivers failed to notice that kids were still in the cars."

These deaths were largely unintended. The parent forgot they had the child that day – a change in routine that caused them to simply forget. The most simple mistakes can have the most terrible outcomes and my heart goes out to these families for the deaths that could have been so easily prevented. We all forget things from time to time, but it doesn't have to result in a tragedy. One of my coworkers relates this anecdote: *"That happened to my cousin's BFF. Her [husband] normally took the kids to school but he was away. The wife went about her daily routine and forgot the baby was in the car when she went to work. The baby didn't make it. The mom found the baby when she went to the car to get her lunch and was able to hold the baby before she died. It is so sad."*

I don't think there's any worse punishment than losing your child this way, to a terrible, human mistake.

From the article:

"Once they're trapped inside the cars, babies and children face temperatures that soar quickly to lethal levels. It takes 10 minutes for the temperature inside a vehicle to rise by 20 degrees; within 30 minutes, it can climb by 34 degrees, according to a heat study sponsored by General Motors."

In that situation, even a mild day — 70 degrees — can quickly become deadly.

A child's body heats up far faster than an adult's and children don't handle heat as well, pediatric emergency experts say. It can take as little as 15 minutes in an overheated car for a child to suffer life-threatening brain or kidney injuries. When body temperature reaches 104 degrees, internal organs shut down. At 107 degrees, children die."

Here are three suggestions to help a parent or caregiver remember that a small child is in the backseat.

- 1. Place a large stuffed animal in the carseat when the child is not there.** Having it in the passenger seat when your child is occupying his or her seat is a visual reminder that your child is in the car.
- 2. Put your purse, briefcase, cell phone – something you absolutely would not leave the car without as you arrive at your workplace or grocery store – in the backseat with your child.** You will open the back door to get it and you will see the child.
- 3. Have a set plan to call or text your partner when a child is dropped off.** If your partner doesn't receive the expected call, they can follow up to make sure the child did arrive safe and sound.

As warmer weather continues, bear these tips in mind – in fact, **what do you do to remember that your child is in the car, maybe sleeping and quiet, so they are not left by mistake?**

Photo: BabyCenter

http://blogs.babycenter.com/tips_and_tricks/20130605-child-deaths-in-hot-cars-three-ways-to-prevent-tragedy/