

Hospital: Simple technique can help prevent hot car deaths

Experts: Put stuffed toy in front seat as a reminder of backseat passenger

By [Kisha Henry](#) UPDATED 6:31 PM CDT Jul 02, 2014



Stuffed toy technique can help prevent hot car deaths
KANSAS CITY, Mo. —The story of a Georgia boy who died after being left in a hot car for seven hours has drawn strong reaction all over the country.

St. Luke's North Hospital is one of the places parents can have their child's car seat checked to make sure it's properly installed -- and not posing any undue risks to the child's safety.

Kansas City's St. Luke's North Hospital has a technique it hopes

parents will use to make sure their child is never forgotten inside a car.

The hospital is giving out small stuffed animals that they hope people will put in an unattended child seat. When a child is put in the seat, the driver should move the stuffed animals to the front seat to serve as a visual reminder that a child is in the car.

If a stuffed animal isn't available, drivers can use a child's clothes, a book, a blanket, a gym bag or a briefcase to help remind them of someone in the back seat.

Kansas City-based Kids and Cars donated the toys and St. Luke's North is giving them to new parents as part of their car seat safety check. The group said 44 children died inside of hot vehicles in 2013, one of the worst years for these types of deaths in history. So far in 2014, 13 children have died.

A child's body temperature will rise three to five times faster than an adult's. Even with windows partially lowered, a parked car can easily reach 125 degrees in minutes during the heat of the summer.

Safety experts urge people to use extra caution, because statistics show that these deaths are usually accidental and can be prevented.

"It can happen to anybody and I think when you put yourself above that, it increases the likelihood that it will happen to you," said Terry Dickinson, a child passenger safety technician for St. Luke's North Hospital.

Experts also urge people to make sure their child's car seats are properly installed.

"Approximately, 65 percent of car seats are not put in the car correctly," Dickinson said. "So, it's more than just getting it in there tight. It's making sure it's angled correctly. It's making sure that the shoulder straps are fitting the child appropriately."

Parents said they're thankful that St. Luke's North is willing to help check those seats for free.

"You worry that it's too tight. You worry that it's hurting her. We're not experts, so we just worry about everything," said parents David and Lori McCune.

St. Luke's North Hospital conducts car seat checks every month. To make an appointment, call the hospital's concierge desk at 816-932-5100.

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