

Safety Clips

for Child Safety Advocates

JUNE 2008

Safety in and around cars

Over the past few years, Dayton Children's has worked to prevent injuries to children during vehicle crashes through community education and outreach about the importance of using child safety seats, booster seats and seat belts appropriately. While the majority of deaths to children involving motor vehicles are traffic related, approximately 10 percent of deaths are reported as nontraffic related.

Nontraffic-related deaths include children killed in driveways, parking lots and on sidewalks as well as other off-road locations. Those killed are usually pedestrians, but may also be on bikes or other wheeled toys or vehicles.

Dayton Children's is currently working to alert parents and the community to some of the other hazards in and around vehicles such as rollovers and children being left in cars. Please share this information with those families you touch.

Backovers

The Regional Pediatric Trauma and Emergency Center at Dayton Children's admitted 35 kids hit by cars in the last 365 days. Twenty-four of these children were younger than 10 years old. Two-thirds of these children were boys.

Because driveway injuries happen at a low rate of speed, the child is bumped over and the car can actually run over them. Most kids injured in driveways are pre-school age. They don't have good judgment and think if they can see the car, it can see them. Experts at Dayton Children's caution those backing out of driveways not to move until all children are in sight and clear. If the child is a toddler, make sure an adult has him or her secure before you move the car. It only takes a second to get life-altering injuries.

Heat-related deaths

Already in 2008 there have been at least five deaths nationally of infants and children after being left inside a hot vehicle. Last year there were a total of 35 such fatalities in the United States due to hyperthermia after children were left in hot cars, trucks, vans and SUVs. This sadly followed 42 and 30 child deaths in 2006 and 2005 respectively. Since 1998 there have been at least a total of 364 of these needless tragedies.

These incidents can occur on days with relatively mild (e.g., ~ 70 degrees F) temperatures and vehicles can reach life-threatening temperatures very rapidly. Within 10 minutes, the inside temperature of a vehicle will be almost 20 degrees hotter than the outside temperature. After 30 minutes the vehicle's temperature will be 34 degrees hotter.

Did you know...

- Within 10 minutes, the inside temperature of a vehicle will be almost 20 degrees hotter than the outside temperature, after 30 minutes the vehicle's temperature will be 34 degrees hotter? (*Safe Kids Worldwide*)
- Nine incidents of fatal car trunk entrapments were reported from 1987 to 1998, resulting in 19 deaths to children less than 7 years of age? All of the incidents occurred in hot weather. (*Safe Kids Worldwide*)

Safety Clips

Dayton Children's relies on our community partners to keep children healthy and safe. Safety Clips are distributed to child health and safety advocates to educate families on the top injuries seen at Dayton Children's and how to keep kids safe. Please share this information with parents and families. If we can be of any further assistance, please call Dayton Children's at 937-641-3385 or visit us at www.childrendayton.org.

Never leave your child alone in a car

Experts at The Children's Medical Center of Dayton remind parents and caregivers that any unlocked car or trunk is a hazard for children who may know how to get in, but not get out—especially in hot weather.

When it's hot outside, it's especially important to protect your children. A closed-up car can quickly turn into an oven, even with the windows cracked.

From 1998 to 2007, approximately 365 children—most of them aged three and younger—died from heat stroke after being trapped in a car.

"Leaving a child in a vehicle for a 'quick' errand is a huge mistake," says Lisa Schwing, RN, program manager at The Regional Pediatric Trauma and Emergency Center at Dayton Children's
"Unfortunately, a delay of just a few minutes on a warm day can lead to tragedy."

Heat is much more dangerous to children than it is to adults. When left in a hot vehicle, a young child's core body temperature may increase three to five times faster than that of an adult's. This could cause permanent injury or even death.

Dayton Children's and Safe Kids Greater Dayton remind parents and caregivers to:

- Teach children not to play in, on or around vehicles.
- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even for one minute or with the window slightly open.
- Always lock a vehicle's doors and trunk—especially at home. Keep keys and remote entry devices out of children's reach.
- Watch children closely around vehicles, particularly when loading and unloading.
- Check to ensure all children leave the vehicle when you reach your destination. Don't overlook sleeping infants.
- Be especially careful if you're dropping off infants or children at child care and that's not part of your normal routine. Have your child care provider contact you if your child does not show up on a day they are expected.
- Place something that you'll need at your next stop— for example a purse, your lunch, gym bag or briefcase—on the floor of the backseat where the child is sitting. This simple act could help prevent you from accidentally forgetting a child.
- Use caution with child-resistant locks. Teach your children how to disable the driver's door locks if they are locked inside a motor vehicle.
- Contact your automobile dealership about getting a trunk release for your car.

For more information on child injury prevention and safety visit us at www.childrensdayton.org.

