



Keeping Your Child Safe

PREVENTING CAR HEAT STROKE

Car heat stroke is a preventable tragedy. Yet dozens of children die each year in the United States from heat stroke in cars. Here are some tips for keeping your child safe.

1.

AVOID THE RISK

Never leave a child alone in a car. A child's body heats up 3-5 times faster than adults. Heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to cool itself fast enough. **Temperatures in a car can rise 20 degrees in just 10 minutes.** Cracking a window or parking in the shade is not enough to control temperature in the car. Leaving your child in the car can be dangerous, even in cool weather. Children with special health care needs, such as a brain or spinal cord injury, may be even more sensitive to the heat.

2.

CREATE A REMINDER

Most commonly, a child is left in a car because they are **forgotten**, often due to a change in routine. Some examples include a change in schedule or adding on a new task to a regular routine. **This happens to even the most caring parents and guardians.** Set up reminders so this doesn't happen to you. A reminder can be to put something you need, like your purse or your shoe, in the back seat with your child. If you use a navigation app, you can set a reminder through the app to check on your passengers once you end your drive. Newer cars even have backseat occupant detection.

Cars can seem like a fun place for kids to play but they can become stuck inside. This can also lead to heat stroke. **Keep car doors and trunks locked when the car is not being used.** Do not allow children to play in cars. Make sure children do not have access to your car keys to prevent them from getting in your car when you are not there. Remember, real car keys are not toys!

3.

TAKE ACTION

If you come upon a child alone in a car, first check on the child. If they are awake and responding, **stay with the child and call 911.** Send someone to try to find a parent or guardian urgently.



IF THE CHILD IS UNRESPONSIVE, CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY. THEN GET THE CHILD OUT, EVEN IF IT MEANS BREAKING INTO THE CAR.



Hopefully these tips will help to keep your children safe in cars and prevent heat stroke. For more information, check out our "Keeping Your Child Safe While Driving" Video series on our website www.childrensnational.org/safekidsdc or **talk to your child's medical team.**





Keeping Your Child Safe WHILE RIDING DURING HEAVY RAIN

Heavy rain can make even the most routine drive a challenge. Floods kill more people in the United States than any other type of hazardous weather. Here are some tips for keeping you and your child safe while riding during heavy rain.

1.

BE PREPARED

Avoid driving during a flood watch or warning. **Pay attention to flood watches and warnings and keep your phone charged.** Know your routes and avoid low lying areas or roads near areas of water such as a lake or river. Keep a stocked emergency kit in your car at all times. Emergency kits typically include **first aid supplies, water, emergency blankets and batteries.** Kits should be personalized for your family's needs. If your child has special needs such as a tracheostomy or ventilator, make sure to have their medical emergency bag in the car.

2.

DRIVING DURING A FLOOD

If you absolutely must drive during a flood watch or warning, **never drive into flood water.** Do not drive around road barriers as they might be protecting you from dangerous levels of water. It can be hard to tell the depth of the water. Only one(1) foot of water is needed to sweep away cars. Half of all deaths from flooding are due to someone driving into flood waters. Remember, as the National Weather Service says "**Turn around, don't drown!**" Be aware of potential quick forming hazards, such as falling trees or downed power lines. And don't let your teen drive during heavy rain, as they are not experienced and might not react quickly.

3.

GETTING STUCK

If your car becomes stuck during a flood, **get out of the car and go to higher ground.** Water levels can rise quickly. You might need to break a window or cut a seat belt to exit your car, so consider that when creating your emergency kit. Do not enter flood waters to get something from the car or help someone who has entered the water. It only takes 6 inches of flood water to sweep away an adult. Once out of the car, **keep children out of the water.** They could get swept away or be injured by a hidden hazard.



Hopefully these tips will help to keep you and your children safe during heavy rain. For more information, check out our "Keeping Your Child Safe While Driving" Video series on our website www.childrensnational.org/safekidsdc or **talk to your child's medical team.**





Keeping Your Child Safe WHILE DRIVING DURING WINTER WEATHER

Severe winter storms can make even the most routine drive a challenge. Here are some tips for keeping you and your child safe while in the car during winter weather.

1.

AVOID THE RISK

If you must drive in winter weather, make sure to have a **charged phone, extra batteries, and an emergency kit** in your car. Emergency kits typically include **first aid supplies, flashlights, water, emergency blankets and batteries**. Kits should be personalized for your family's needs. If your child has special health care needs, like a tracheostomy, make sure to have their medical emergency bag. To keep warm, dress children in multiple thin layers of clothes rather than a single heavy coat. Layers can be removed if they get hot or wet. **Remember to remove bulky winter coats or snow suits before buckling up to ensure a snug fit in the car seat or seat belt.** After they are secured, you can place their coat or a blanket over top of them for warmth. Children with special health care needs might be more sensitive to the cold, so keep extra socks and blankets in the car for them.

2.

DRIVE CAREFULLY

First, slow down. Even if the road just looks wet, it can be slick or icy. **If you start to slide, take your foot off the gas, and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want to go.** Clear off any ice or snow from your car before you drive, as it can block your view or cause harm to others. Let someone know you are travelling so they can expect your arrival and they can check in if you are late. Avoid letting your teen drive in the snow as they are not experienced drivers and might not know how to react.

3.

STUCK IN THE SNOW

If you get stuck in the snow, **stay with your car!** It's easy to get lost in a snowstorm.

- Run your car engine 10 minutes every hour for warmth
- Clear snow from your tail pipe to avoid buildup of dangerous gases in the car
- Turn on the light inside of the car and tie a bright piece of fabric to your car to be more visible to rescue



Hopefully these tips will help to keep you and your children safe during winter weather. For more information, check out our "Keeping Your Child Safe While Driving" Video series on our website www.childrensnational.org/safekidsdc or **talk to your child's medical team.**

