



He's a killer.

# KIDS IN HOT CARS HEATSTROKE FACT SHEET

Vehicles heat up quickly. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and other safety advocates and academic institutions have recognized the safety threat heatstroke poses for leaving children in hot cars. Here are the key facts.

## Heatstroke is the leading cause of non-crash-related fatalities for children 14 and younger.

- From 1998-2014 636 children died due to heatstroke. Of the 636 deaths:
  - 53% child "forgotten" by caregiver (336 children)
  - 29% child playing in unattended vehicle (186 children)
  - 17% child intentionally left in vehicle by adult (110 children)
  - 1% were unknown cases (4 children)
- In 2014 there were at least thirty heatstroke deaths of children in vehicles.
- Children are at a higher risk than adults of dying from heatstroke in a hot vehicle especially when they are too young to communicate.
- A child's temperature heats up 3 to 5 times faster than that of an adult's.

## High body temperatures can cause permanent injury or even death.

- Heatstroke begins when the core body temperature reaches about 104

degrees and the thermoregulatory system is overwhelmed. A core temperature of about 107 degrees is lethal.

- In 10 minutes a car can heat up 20 degrees. Rolling down a window does little to keep it cool.
- Heatstroke fatalities have occurred even in vehicles parked in shaded areas and when the air temperatures were 80 degrees F or less.
- Heatstroke can occur in temperatures as low as 57 degrees.
- The warning signs vary, but may include:
  - Red, hot, and moist or dry skin
  - No sweating
  - A strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse
  - A throbbing headache
  - Dizziness
  - Nausea
  - Confusion
  - Being grouchy or acting strangely

## It can happen to anyone.

- In 53 percent of cases the child was "forgotten" by the caregiver.
- In more than 29 percent of cases, a child got into the vehicle on their own.

