

## Summer Heat Dangers

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With recent deaths of unattended children, the elderly and pets in vehicles across our great State and Country, there is no time like the present to remind everyone of the importance of not leaving any child, senior citizen or pet unattended in an automobile. Temperatures inside an automobile can reach temperatures up to one hundred forty degrees in a matter of minutes. As you can tell from recent news stories and countless tragedies across the country, these tragedies just don't happen to irresponsible parents, these tragedies can happen to anyone. Even caregivers and parents with the best of intentions can fall victim to these tragedies. With our busy and hectic lives this can happen much easier than most truly realize.

It also never a good idea to leave pets, the elderly or children in unattended vehicles even when the vehicles is running and air conditioning operating. Assuming the air conditioning will continue to work while occupants are left unattended in an automobile is a dangerous practice that should never be attempted. The elderly, children and pets are prone to becoming overcome by rising temperatures inside closed automobiles and are often times unable to seek help when needed. Unfortunately, the end result can be heat stroke and even death. Not to mention leaving pets, the elderly and children in cars while running has created many accidents, injuries and even deaths over the years because of cars being put in gear intentionally or unintentionally.

I know that most of you are saying, "I would never dream of doing such a thing or taking such a chance". However, statistics show that each and every year far too many chances or oversights occur causing serious injury and death to not only humans, but pets as well. Even with the automobiles windows down, temperatures can reach one hundred twenty five degrees within twenty minutes.

Other dangers with summer heat and bright sunlight are sunburn, accidental burns and dehydration. Items within an automobile such as: Vinyl interior parts, metal interior parts and even leather can absorb the heat and sunlight causing instant burns to unprotected body parts upon contact. Placing a car cover, window shades and even towels across prone areas of your automobile can prevent such tragedies from occurring. Sunburn can be avoided by covering exposed parts of the body with clothing, shade or sun blocking lotions. Dehydration can be avoided by consuming lots of liquids, especially water regularly.

Thirst is one indicator of dehydration, but is not an early warning sign. By the time you feel thirsty, you might already be dehydrated. Other symptoms of dehydration include but are not limited to the following:

- Feeling Dizzy
- Having a dry or sticky mouth
- Producing less sweat
- Pale cold skin
- Disorientation
- Nausea and Light Headedness

And please don't be fooled by cooler temperatures in the seventies and eighties. It doesn't have to be in the nineties or one hundred degree range to cause serious injury or death. We must also do all we can to check in on the shut-ins, sick and elderly who live alone. These individuals can become overburdened with rising medical and utility costs often finding themselves without air conditioning. Making a decision when pills are piling up on what to cut from the budget can be tough when it comes to air conditioning in the middle of one of the hottest summers in recent memory. Think about it, what would you cut first? Would it be replacing or repairing the air conditioning, buying food, paying the house note, medical, water, phone, electric or other bills? We can't overlook these fine people. Please keep them in your thoughts.

In closing, I know these seem like silly common sense reminders. However, preventing and eliminating further suffering, injuries and deaths can never be over rated or over stated.

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