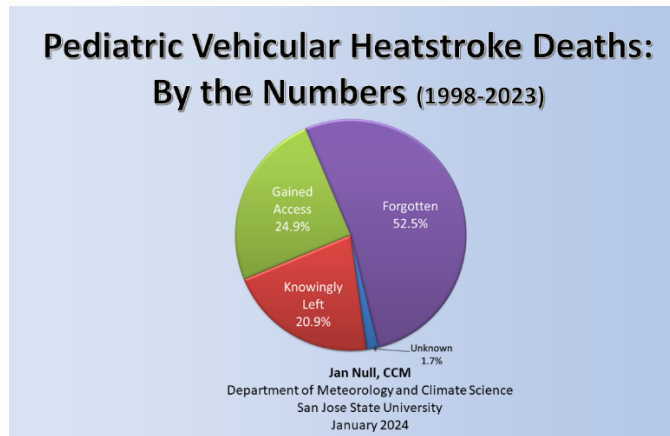


Summer - Heatstroke Safety Tips



As warmer summer days are upon us, Safe Kids Grand Forks wants to offer some tips to keep your family and loved ones safe during this time of year. Each year, an average of 38 children die of heatstroke in hot vehicles. These types of tragedies are preventable if proper precautions are taken. As you can see from the image above, over half of the kids are forgotten by their caregivers. To prevent these situations:

- Create reminders such as leaving a purse, backpack or even your shoe in the back seat where the child is located.
- Set up a system with your parenting partner to always call or text when the child is dropped off or picked up. Ask your childcare center to call if your child is expected and has not arrived yet.
- Make it a habit of always checking the back seat. For a free window cling reminder, contact Safe Kids Grand Forks at safekids@altru.org.

In nearly a quarter of the heatstroke deaths, children gained access to the vehicle and were not able to get out. These are often times young toddlers or children with special needs. They get into the car and may not know how to exit or are by a door in which the child safety lock is in use, preventing them from opening on the inside. To prevent these type of incidents:

- When the car is not in use (even if it is in a secured garage), lock the vehicle and put the keys up and out of reach of children. This is a practice that all vehicle owners should get into the habit of, not just those with kids as many situations have occurred when a young child gets into a vehicle in a parking lot or someone else's driveway.
- Teach kids to never play in or around a car.

Sadly, some children die in hot cars after being left in them intentionally. To prevent these types of situations:

- Never leave young kids or those with decreased cognitive skills alone in a vehicle. Trips inside can get longer than expected or vehicles can shut off after an extended period of time. As a reminder, temperatures inside a vehicle can heat up to about 19 degrees hotter than outside in as little as 20 minutes. Children's body temperatures overheat 3-5 times faster than adults so even on a mild day, the temperatures inside a car can become unbearable to young kids. Cracking the windows makes very little difference on the internal temperatures, leaving young or vulnerable children at risk.

Awareness of these type of tragedies is simply the first step in preventing them from happening. If you should happen to see a young child alone in a vehicle during the hot days of summer, contact 911 if the caregiver can't be readily found. Children can go from being okay to in danger quickly and emergency responders will know how to enter the vehicle without injuring the child inside and will be able to render first aid. Calling is not about getting anyone into trouble, but rather potentially saving a life.

For more information on this topic or other childhood injury prevention risk areas, contact Safe Kids at safekids@altru.org or call 701-780-1489.