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Keeping Children Safe In The Heat

Rita Fleming

Tennessee State University, rfleming2@tnstate.edu

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College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences

Disaster Education Response Team



Keeping Children Safe In The Heat

Rita Fleming

Summer is here and with more intense sun, comes extreme heat. Parents should learn some important facts to keep their children safe in the heat. Heat affects children more easily than it affects adults so parents should watch their children carefully for any sign of heat stroke or dehydration. Last year, 42 children died in the U.S. from heat stroke caused by being left or trapped in a vehicle. Infants and young children are sensitive to the effects of extreme heat, and must rely on other people to keep them cool and hydrated.

- **What can parents do?**

- Make sure children don't play in, on, or around vehicles.
- Never leave a child alone in a car for any reason for any amount of time.
- Always make sure to lock the vehicle's doors and trunk.
- Keep keys and remotes away from children.
- Place things you will need when you stop in the back seat so you never accidentally forget a child is in the back seat.

- **Suggestions to preventing heat stroke.**

- Make sure children drink plenty of water.
- Make sure children drink water and not sugary drinks that cause the body to lose more body fluid.
- Avoid cold drinks because they can cause stomach cramps.
- Keep children indoors in air-conditioning during times of extreme heat.
- If there is no air conditioning, go to a public place like a mall or public library.
- Go to a heat-relief shelter in your area, contact the local health department for location.
- If outdoors, go before noon or in the evening when it's cooler.
- Make sure children drink more fluids if they are very active outdoors.
- Have them drink sports beverages to help replace the salt and minerals lost in sweating
- Rest in shady areas.
- Protect children with hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher.
- Have children wear lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothing.



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Disaster Education Resources
Call (615) 963-1375 for further information*



- **Treatments for heat exhaustion or heat stroke.**

- Move to a shady area.
- Drink water
- Rest
- Take a cool sponge bath until body temperature reaches 101°F.
- Change to light weight clothing.
- Move to an air conditioned place.
- Get medical help if the symptoms get worse or last more than 1 hour.



Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health
Safe Kids USA - Preventing Injuries At Home, At Play, and On The Way



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