



SUMMER SAFETY

A Miami Children's Hospital Summer Safety Series, August 2007



PREVENT BACKOVER ACCIDENTS: REMEMBER TO SPOT THE TOT

In one brief, horrific moment, life is tragically, unalterably changed for another South Florida family. A parent, grandparent or other relative backs out of the driveway, only to discover that the family's precious toddler has been run over by the car.

Miami Children's Hospital's Trauma Center has received a record number of backover accident victims in 2007. "Typically we would treat one or two of these cases per year. Since January, we have received nine backover victims, two with such severe injuries that they died," said Dr. Malvin Weinberger, Director of Trauma Services.

To help combat this alarming trend, Miami Children's Hospital is teaming up with Safe Kids Worldwide to remind drivers of the importance of checking behind their vehicles before every trip. Also, because small children often dart out after a departing family member, drivers are advised to make it a habit to leave small children under the watchful eye – or better yet, securely in the arms – of a caregiver when leaving in the car.



SPOT THE TOT

Safe Kids Worldwide, an organization dedicated to promoting safety techniques and education, promotes its Spot the Tot program to help draw attention to the prevalence of back-over accidents.

"Spot the Tot offers several easy steps to keep children safer around cars," said Dr. Deise Granado-Villar, Director of Preventive Medicine and Community Pediatrics at MCH, and supervisor of the Safe Kids program staff for Miami-Dade County. Here are guidelines:

Parents and Caregivers

- Firmly hold the hand of children when in driveways, parking lots and sidewalks.

Drivers

- Drivers, even those without children of their own, are cautioned to do a safety check to look for children walking or playing around cars.

- Drivers should walk all the way around a parked vehicle to check for kids, toys and pets before entering the car and starting the motor.

Caregivers

- When a parent or close family member is leaving the household, those staying behind should hold on to small children to ensure that they don't run out the door and into the path of a departing car.

SUVs MEAN BIGGER BLIND SPOTS

Any motor vehicle has a blind spot that drivers must consider when reversing.

But today's popular sports utility vehicles have larger blind spots than standard cars.

"In a sedan, the driver must deal with a blind spot of 12 to 20 feet," said Dr. Granado-Villar. "The range varies depending on the height of the driver, with shorter drivers experiencing a larger blind spot. In a SUV, drivers are facing blind spots of 16 to 26 feet depending on driver height."

"With all these big cars driving around, we all need to slow down and take a minute to make sure that children are safe," said Dr. Granado-Villar. "Pausing to walk around your car before you leave home to make certain you have an 'all clear' can make a difference in saving a child's life." Additional information on child safety can be found at www.safekids.org.



PROMOTING SAFETY THROUGH LEGISLATION

Efforts are being made on a national level to enhance vehicle safety to prevent injuries among children. A bill recently approved by a Senate committee, if enacted by

Congress, would direct the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to set performance standards for cars so that drivers can detect a person or object behind the vehicle.

"We are encouraged and we applaud lawmakers for continuing to address child safety issues," said Nancy Humbert, Vice President of Strategic Business Planning and Public Affairs at Miami Children's.

"The proposed Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act of 2007 aims to enhance vehicle safety features. The combination of improved safety features coupled with adult vigilance and supervision should go a long way to end this tragic trend," she said.

Learn more about the proposed legislation at the Kids and Cars website at www.kidsandcars.org.



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Miami Children's Hospital is South Florida's one and only hospital *exclusively* for children. We care for more children than any other hospital in the region. No other physicians have more access to advanced pediatric-specific technology, and are supported by a nationally recognized nursing staff and highly trained pediatric medical professionals.

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