

Back to School + Backpack Safety = Happy, Healthy Kids!

While its purpose is for carrying homework and other items to and from school, as well as being seen as a fashion accessory by the children and teens wearing them, backpacks often can be the source of pain. Follow these tips below to ensure your child is choosing the right backpack.

How to choose a backpack

- Make sure the backpack itself is lightweight.
- Look for double, wide, padded shoulder straps, a cross-body messenger bag or a rolling suitcase style.
- Bags with several pockets allow an even distribution of weight.

How to pack a backpack

- The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) recommends limiting the backpack's weight to no more than 10 percent of the child's body weight.
- Try to distribute weight evenly, using all compartments available. • Pack and transport only essential supplies and empty the bag each night.

How to wear a backpack

- Tighten the straps on traditional bags so they fit close to the body.
- The backpack should never hang more than four inches below the waistline, says the ACA.
- Use the bag accordingly
 - Two straps should be worn on both shoulders
 - Messenger bag should be worn across the body and not on one shoulder
 - Roller suitcases should be pulled rather than picked up

Backpack problems

Backpacks worn incorrectly, such as those hanging off one shoulder or are too heavy can result in:

- Pain in the neck, shoulders and back
- Incorrect posture (leaning too far one way or the other) and affect the way they walk and increase the risk of falls
- Tingling, numbness, and weakness of the arms and hands—especially if the straps are narrow and cutting into the shoulders
- Displaying red marks on the skin indicate the child is carrying too much weight



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