



## BACKPACKS AND YOUR KIDS

Getting Back to School Can Be “Back Breaking” Work: Don’t let a Heavy Backpack Ruin Your Child’s Day.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The American Chiropractic Association, its Council on Occupational Health and your local doctor of chiropractic offer the following tips to help prevent the needless pain an over stuffed backpack could cause the student in your household.

And now that backpacks have begun to replace briefcases in the work place, you too, might want to follow this advice:

—Make sure your child’s backpack weighs no more than 5 to 10 percent of his or her body weight, the backpack will cause your child to begin bending forward in an attempt to support the weight on his or her back rather than on the shoulders, by the straps.

—A backpack with individualized compartments will help you position the contents most effectively and ensure that your child’s sandwich isn’t flattened by a heavy textbook.

—When packing the backpack, make sure that pointy or bulky objects are packed away from the area that will rest on the child’s back. An uneven surface rubbing against your child’s back could cause painful blisters.

—Tell your child to use both shoulder straps, not just one. A backpack slung over one shoulder disproportionately shifts all of the weight to one side, and can cause not only neck and muscle spasms, but also low back pain.

—Padded shoulder straps are very important. Not only will they be more comfortable than non-padded straps, but they will also help prevent the straps from digging into your child’s shoulders.

—The shoulder straps should be adjustable, so the backpack can be fitted to your child’s body.

Shoulder straps that are too loose can cause the backpack to dangle uncomfortably, and cause misalignment and pain.

—If the backpack is still too heavy, talk with your child’s teacher. It might be possible to leave the heaviest books at school, and bring home only lighter handout materials or work books.

—Talk to your child about the proper use of backpacks and help him or her understand why this and other ergonomic issues are important. A child who is educated early in life on these issues can apply this knowledge late in life (at home or in the office) and as a result, your child will be happier and healthier.



Working together for the betterment of our children’s health



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