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Backpack safety stats

- **More than 40 million students carry school backpacks**
- **More than half of children in a study regularly carried more than the recommended 15% of their body weight in their school backpacks.**
- **58% of orthopedists polled in 1999 in Chicago and Wilmington, Delaware, reported treating children with back or shoulder pain attributable to carrying backpacks.**
- **The most common symptom reported from backpack use is "rucksack palsy." This condition results when pressure put on the nerve in the shoulder causes numbness in the hands, muscle wasting, and in extreme cases, nerve damage.**
- **More than 3,300 children, aged 5-14 years, were treated in emergency rooms for injuries related to backpacks in 1998; these numbers do not include students who went to family physicians or doctors of chiropractic.**
- **Chiropractic is a safe and effective form of health care. Dr. DeCubellis is a health care professional who works with children who are experiencing back or neck pain, stiffness, tingling, numbness, low energy and those who simply want to add to an already healthy active lifestyle.**

Ways to Prevent Backpack Injury and Some Tips for Safe Backpack Wearing:

Wear a backpack properly:

Limit the backpack's weight to no more than 10 or 15% of your child's weight. You can tell if your child's bag is too heavy if he or she has to lean forward to support the weight on his or her back rather than on the shoulders, by the straps

If a backpack is too heavy, take the time to go through the bag with your child and decide together what non-school-related items are really necessary to carry.

Purchase a backpack that is appropriate for your child's age and size. Many manufacturers offer special child-sized versions that weigh less and sit at the appropriate place in your back. A smaller bag will also help prevent over-stuffing for smaller children.

Distribute the weight properly. Put the heavier items on the bottom and against the back to keep the weight off of your shoulders and maintain a better posture. Adjust contents in the bag so that the surface resting against your child's back is as flat as possible. In addition to blisters and chafing, an uneven surface could press into the small of one's back contorting it.

Wear both shoulder straps unless your pack is designed for use on one shoulder.

Carrying a heavy backpack using one strap can shift the weight to one side, which can lead to neck and muscles spasms, low back pain, walking improperly and may even misalign the spine.

Choose a backpack with thickly padded shoulder straps. Non-padded straps dig into the shoulders causing pain due to compression loading of the acromioclavicular joints and stress on the trapezium muscles. In addition to cutting down on how much the backpack digs into your child's shoulders, a wider strap will better distribute the bag's weight across the shoulders.

The shoulder straps should be adjustable, so the backpack rests comfortably approximately two inches above the waist. A bag too high or low on the back can pull awkwardly on the shoulders.

Choose a backpack with a lumbar support. The lumbar cushion will redistribute weight to the lower extremities, creating a fulcrum that facilitates an upright standing position and good posture that is essential for proper spinal health.

Use an ergonomic backpack. Shift the weight off the shoulders, neck and upper back to the lower back. This will prevent injury and is more comfortable. Airpicks are a brand of back pack that is ergonomically designed to address these concerns.

Educate your children about the dangers of lugging too much weight. Most kids are unaware of both the short- and long-term dangers of back strains.

Lift a backpack correctly.

- Face the backpack before you lift it.
- Bend at the knees and lift with your legs not with your back.
- Keep the pack close to the body.

Carry only what you need. Every extra item adds weight!

The Backpack Safety Quiz!

- 1.) What percentage of their body weight should a person wearing a backpack not exceed? ____
- 2.) A backpack properly worn should have one or two straps on the shoulders? _____
- 3.) Name one problem that is associated with improper backpack usage. _____
- 4.) You should bend at the _____ and lift with your _____ not your back.
- 5.) Use the _____ backpack with a _____ support for added stabilization.

ANSWERS: 1.) 15% 2.) Two 3.) "rucksack palsy" 4.) Knees, legs 5.) Ergonomic, lumbar



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"Caring For All Ages"

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VALID FROM 9/01-10/26/16 for the initial visit

\$17.00 for the first family member

\$10.00 for additional family members

Learn more about us on the web at:

www.drdchiropractic.com

