

Healthy Living

How to help avoid pain from backpack use

What Can You Do?

The ACA offers the following tips to help prevent the needless pain that backpack misuse could cause the students in your household.

- Make sure your child's backpack weighs no more than 10 percent of his or her body weight. A heavier backpack will cause your child to bend forward to support the weight on the back, rather than the shoulders.
- The backpack should never hang more than four inches below the waistline. A backpack that hangs too low increases the weight on the shoulders, causing your child to lean forward when walking.
- A backpack with individualized compartments helps in positioning the contents most effectively.
- Make sure that pointy or bulky objects are packed away from the area that will rest on your child's back.
- Bigger is not necessarily better. The more room there is in a backpack, the more your child will carry-and the heavier the backpack will be.
- Urge your child to wear both shoulder straps. Lugging the backpack around by one strap can cause the disproportionate shift of weight to one side, leading to neck and muscle spasms, as well as low-back pain.
- Wide, padded straps are very important. Non-padded straps are uncomfortable, and can dig into your child's shoulders.
- The shoulder straps should be adjustable so the backpack to fit to your child's body. Straps that are too loose can cause the backpack to dangle, causing spinal misalignment and pain.
- If the backpack is still too heavy, talk to your child's teacher. Ask if your child could leave the heaviest books at school, and bring home only lighter hand-out materials or workbooks. Or encourage your local school district to purchase textbooks online.

- ▶ Although the use of rollerpacks - or backpacks on wheels - has become popular in recent years, the ACA is now recommending that they be used cautiously and on a limited basis by only those students who are not physically able to carry a backpack. Some school districts have begun banning the use of rollerpacks because they clutter hallways, resulting in dangerous trips and falls.

Chiropractic Care Can Help

If your child experiences pain or discomfort resulting from backpack use or if you are concerned about their backpack fit, call Dr. Smith. She is licensed and trained to diagnose and treat patients of all ages and uses a gentler type of treatment for children. Additionally, she may prescribe specific stretches and exercises designed to help children (or adults) develop muscles to help with carrying a backpack. She also provides a wealth of knowledge about good nutrition, posture and sleeping habits.



Dr. Diane K. Smith, DC, CCSP
Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician
Chiropractic Acupuncutre

Providing:

- Chiropractic
- Acupuncture
- Graston Technique
- Rock Taping
- Cupping
- Cold Laser
- Nutrition
- ...
- And Backpack Fitting



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