

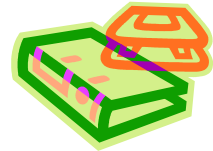


Backpack Safety

Backpacks are a popular and practical way for children and teenagers to carry schoolbooks and supplies. However, backpacks that are too heavy or are worn incorrectly can cause problems. Improperly used backpacks can lead to severe back, neck, and shoulder pain, as well, as posture problems. As you shop for the next school year consider the following:

Choose the right backpack.

- * Wide, padded shoulder straps; narrow straps can dig into shoulders.
- * Two shoulder straps;
- * Padded back; a padded back protects against sharp edges on objects inside the pack and increases comfort.
- * Waist strap; a waist strap can distribute the weight of a heavy load more evenly.



To prevent injury when using a backpack, do the following:

- * Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles. Wearing a backpack on one shoulder may increase curvature of the spine.
- * Tighten the straps so that the pack is close to the body. The straps should hold the pack two inches above the waist.
- * Pack light. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 % of the student's total body weight.
- * Organize the backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back.
- * Stop often at school lockers, if possible. Do not carry all of the books needed for the day.
- * Bend using both knees, when you bend down. Do not bend over at the waist when wearing or lifting a heavy backpack.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics at www.aap.org/advocacy/backpack_safety.pdf



"I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." 3 John 1:2