



Quick Review for Backpack Safety

- ▶ Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that each year more than 7,500 emergency room visits can be attributed to backpack-related injuries.
- ▶ More than 1/2 of all school children go to school with backpacks that are too heavy for their growing bodies.
- ▶ Along with back pain, students can suffer with headaches, posture problems and various other health problems.

Tips:

- ▶ **Straps** - Choose backpacks that have wide cushioned straps to distribute weight on shoulders evenly.
- ▶ **Waist Strap** - Backpacks with waist straps help stabilize the load by not allowing the pack to flop around.
- ▶ **Fit** - Make sure the backpack fits properly. Straps should not be so tight that the backpack goes above the collar line and the pack should not be wider than the shoulders. It should also be adjusted tightly enough so that it does not hang more than four inches below the belt line.
- ▶ **Pack correctly** –
 - Backpack should have multiple compartments so weight can be evenly distributed.
 - Pack heaviest objects first so that they are carried lower and closer to the body.
 - Students should only be packing essential items and if needed, make frequent stops at a locker to exchange books.
- ▶ **Backpack Weight to Body Ratio:** Weight of the loaded backpack should not be more than 10-15% of the child's weight.
- ▶ **Lift correctly** –
 - First check the weight of the backpack.
 - Avoid side bending and twisting when lifting the backpack.
 - Face the backpack before picking it up. Bend at the knees and make sure to lift with the legs, not with the back.
 - Put on one strap at a time.

Warning Signs: It's important for parents to look for the warning signs that backpacks are being worn or used inappropriately. Early parent intervention can prevent serious injuries, the types of injuries which may result in long-term health problems, especially among young children whose bodies are still developing and growing.

If parents notice any of the warning signs listed below, they should speak to their chiropractor immediately

- ▶ Child cannot take their backpack off or put it on without struggling.
- ▶ Child has to lean forward to carry the backpack.
- ▶ Child has numbness or weakness in the arms and legs.
- ▶ Child has one shoulder that is higher than the other.