

BACK TO SCHOOL

Take the stress out of back to school with the right backpack

For parents back to school season is a roller coaster of emotions. The desire to see our children maximize their potential while remaining safe and happy fills us with anxiety, pride, and concern. The safety and well-being of our children is always something that is top of mind for parents. This worry and concern is exemplified when it is time for our kids to head back to school. While some things are completely out of parent's control, it is important to take necessary precautions and prepare our children for what lies ahead.

One common and avoidable back to school ailment that can impact kids in both the long and short term is backpack related injuries. Backpack related injuries are not something that immediately raises our concern, however sharing these simple strategies with our children can help them avoid injuries associated with backpacks and alleviate another back to school worry for parents:

Choose the right backpack: Forget good looking leather. It's far too heavy. Go for vinyl or canvas. Pick a pack that has two wide, adjustable, padded shoulder straps, along with a hip or waist strap, padded back and plenty of pockets. Make sure the pack fits properly, is

not too snug around the arms and under the armpits, and that its size is proportionate to the wearer's body.

Pack it properly: Your kids are not moving out, so make sure to pack only what is needed for that day, and that the weight is distributed evenly. It's a good idea to know roughly what each item weighs. The total weight of the filled pack should be no more than 10 to 15 per cent of the wearer's own body weight.

Put the backpack on properly: It's a good idea to help young children with this, at least the first few times. Put the pack on a flat surface, at waist height. Slip on the pack, one shoulder at a time, then adjust the straps to fit comfortably. Remember when lifting a backpack, or any item, to lift using the arms and legs and to bend at the knees.

Teach your child the right way to wear it: Both shoulder straps should be used, and adjusted so that the pack fits snugly to the body, without dangling to the side. Backpacks should never be worn over just one shoulder. You should be able to slide your hand between the backpack and your child's back. The waist strap should also be worn for added stability.

For more information www.chiropractic.on.ca.

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