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the registration guide



5 tips to prevent backpack injuries in kids

Whether your kids are into school, sports or music, they all need a good backpack to lug their goods to and from school and extracurricular activities. As parents prepare for the annual back-to-school

season, Ontario's chiropractors are sharing some simple tips to help kids avoid injuries commonly associated with backpacks. Here's how to carry the load comfortably and safely:

- 1. Choose the right backpack.** Forget good looking leather — it's far too heavy. Opt for vinyl or canvas instead. Pick a pack that has two wide, adjustable, padded shoulder straps, a hip or waist strap, a 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.
- 2. Pack it properly.** Your kids are not moving out, so make sure to pack only what is needed for that day and distribute the weight evenly. It's a good idea to know roughly what each item weighs. The total weight of a filled pack should be no more than 10 to 15 per cent of the wearer's own body weight.
- 3. 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, and then adjust the straps to fit comfortably. When lifting a backpack or any heavy item, re-



member to lift with the arms and legs and bend at the knees.

- 4. 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.

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