

Is Your Child's Backpack Hurting Their Back?



They may want the newest, coolest style backpack, but how do you know which bag is *best* for them?

Tips for Protecting Your Child's Spinal Health

YOUR CHILD SHOULD CARRY NO MORE THAN 10% OF THEIR TOTAL BODY WEIGHT, which means if your child weighs 80 pounds then the bag (when full) should weigh no more than 8 pounds.

Carrying these heavier bags causes your child's back to be **pulled backwards** which means they may try to lean forward to compensate for the additional weight. The result is unnecessary stress on the spine of a growing child.



Many students are carrying 20-40 pounds in their packs when they head home in the afternoon!



KEEP IT BALANCED

One other reason backpacks tend to cause health issues is because children think it makes more of a fashion statement to wear the bag over one shoulder. It's got more "attitude".

Even if the child is carrying the correct amount of weight, this is putting all of the weight on one shoulder, which is not good for posture or the spine.

Backpacks are better than shoulder bags or purses because they help to distribute the weight using the strongest muscles in the body – the back and abdominals.

OTHER TIPS

- Consider the weight of the pack itself. Canvas bags are a lot lighter than the leather ones and every bit helps.
- Look for a pack with hip and chest belts to transfer the weight from the back to the hips and chest.
- Make sure the bag has two wide and padded shoulder straps so they don't dig into the shoulders.
- Multiple compartments help distribute the weight of the pack's contents.
- Reflective material increases visibility on dark mornings.
- Extra padding in the back reduces pressure on the back.



These tips provided to you by:

**Active Health
Wellness Center**

Providing Chiropractic, Orthopedics
& Physical Therapy Services