

Pack it Light. Wear it Right.

It's common for kids to lug around backpacks appearing to be twice their body weight. Though it may seem cool to sling a heavy load over one shoulder - long-term head, neck, and shoulder pain is not. Here are some helpful tips that will help your child carry their backpack with ease.



Carrying a heavy backpack is a spinal hazard and, over time, may lead to altered posture and gait.

Backpacks can affect your child's health

Carrying a heavy load can lead to poor posture and a distorted spinal column. Over time this can cause muscle strain, headaches, back, neck and arm pain, and even nerve damage.

A heavy backpack carried on one shoulder forces the muscles and spine to compensate for the uneven weight. This places stress on the mid and lower back.

Backpack DOs and DON'Ts

- DON'T sling your backpack on one side
- DO wear both straps and adjust them so that the pack fits snugly.
- DO use the waist strap. It reduces the strain on your back.
- DON'T carry your backpack too low: this can cause you to lean forward and puts the weight on your upper back.



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PREVENTION IS KEY

Choosing the right backpack



- Select a lightweight backpack in vinyl or canvas.
- Pick a pack with two wide shoulder straps and hip or waist strap and padded back.
- Try it for fit — not too tight around the shoulders and armpits and proportionate to wearer.

Packing it properly

- Backpack should only contain what is needed for the day.
- Full backpack should be no more than 10-15% of wearer's body weight.
- Place heaviest objects close to the body and light or odd-shaped objects away from the back.

Research indicates that during the teenage years more than **50 percent** of young people will experience at least one episode of lower back pain. If your child complains of back pain and numbness or weakness in their arms and legs, consult a chiropractor for an evaluation.

Putting the backpack on

- Place the backpack on a flat surface and slip it on one shoulder at a time. Adjust straps to fit comfortably.
- When lifting the backpack use both arms and legs, and bend at the knees. Give young children a hand.



Wearing a backpack

- Backpacks should never be worn over only one shoulder — this can result in neck, shoulder, and back pain.
- Both shoulder straps should be used and adjusted so the backpack sits flush against the back.
- Test the fit of the backpack by sliding your hand between the backpack and your child's back - if you can't slide your hand in, the backpack is too snug.