

ABC'S Of Backpack Safety



Aquire the RIGHT PACK

This is the most important step. It is recommended that parents don't buy the first backpack they see. The backpack should never be wider or longer than your child's torso, and the pack should not hang more than 4 inches below the waistline.

A backpack that hangs too low increases the weight on the shoulders, causing your child to lean forward when walking. It's important to make sure the backpack feels comfortable to the child and the straps can be adjusted for a tight fit. The pack should have two wide, adjustable, padded shoulder straps; and a padded back. A backpack with individualized compartments helps position the contents most effectively. Make sure that pointy or bulky objects are packed away from the area that will rest on your child's back, and try to place the heaviest items closest to the body.

Body WEIGHT

The maximum weight of a loaded backpack should not exceed 10%-15% of your body weight. For example, a child who weighs 100 pounds should not carry a backpack heavier than 10 pounds, and a 50-pound child should not carry more than 5 pounds. To help with this, carry only what is absolutely necessary. TIP: If the backpack causes the wearer to bend forward to manage the load, it is over-filled.

Carry CORRECTLY

Properly lifting and carrying your back can help prevent injuries. To lift properly: 1). Face the pack 2). Bend at the knees 3). Check the weight by slightly lifting off the ground using both hands. (too heavy? Remove items) 4). Lifting with your legs apply one shoulder strap, and then the other. USE BOTH shoulder straps - making them snug, but not too tight. If the pack has a waist strap, use it.

FACTS:

More than 79 million students in the U.S.A. carry school backpacks

55% of students carry a pack that is too heavy for them

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission cited 5,415 backpack-related injuries treated at emergency rooms in 2013

In one study, 64% of American students ages 11-15 years old reported back pain related to heavy backpacks