



Give a Back a Break



Mini Fact:

About 55 percent of kids carry a backpack that is too heavy for them.

How's your back been feeling over the past couple of weeks? If you've noticed a new ache, it could be because of your heavy backpack.

School Backpack Awareness Day is Wednesday, Sept. 21. The American Occupational Therapy Association wants kids to know how to choose, pack and wear their backpacks to avoid back injury or pain.

Back pain is no joke

It might sound funny to some to think of young kids having back pain. But experts say the heavy loads kids carry can cause injuries that can last into adulthood. In fact, thousands of kids are treated in emergency rooms every year for injuries caused by heavy backpacks.

Experts recommend that a loaded backpack weigh no more than 10 percent of the child's weight.



$$70 \text{ pounds} \times 10\% = 7 \text{ pounds}$$

Choosing a backpack

If you're still shopping for a school pack, keep in mind these rules.

1. Make sure the pack is the right height. It should go from 2 inches below the shoulder

blades to the waist or slightly above the waist.

2. A backpack should have well-padded shoulder straps and should be worn on both shoulders.

3. Backpacks that have a hip or chest strap cause less strain on neck and shoulder muscles and improve your balance.

Pack it up

The way you pack your bag makes a difference, too. Use the different pockets to distribute the weight throughout the pack.



Put heavier items (dark red) toward the back and center of the backpack. Lighter items (pink) go in front. Keep sharp items away from your back.



Pick up your loaded backpack by bending and lifting in the knees, not from your waist.



Your backpack should rest snugly against your back.

Images courtesy AOTA

Adjust the chest and hip straps to help ease the weight on your back.

What's in your pack?

You can make school mornings easier by loading your backpack the night before. Keep your papers and other supplies organized so you don't have to dig for what you need.

How many of these things can you leave at school so they don't weigh down your backpack?

- books
- glue
- crayons
- paints
- scissors
- extra paper
- clothes for P.E.
- jacket, hat or gloves
- equipment for after-school sports



Safety first

Be careful when getting on or off the school bus. Make sure your backpack straps don't get caught in a handrail or door hinge.

If your shoulder straps have more than 3 inches of extra strap dangling, secure them with a twist tie or have a parent cut off the extra length.

Resources



On the Web:

- youtu.be/sQyYjZersuY
- bit.ly/2aGIQ5W

At the library:

- "This School Year Will Be THE BEST!" by Kay Winters
- "School's First Day of School" by Adam Rex

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of backpacks are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



BACKPACK, BALANCE,
CARRY, CHEST,
DISTRIBUTE, HEAVY,
HEIGHT, HIP, LOAD,
PAIN, POCKETS,
POUNDS, SAFETY,
SCHOOL, SHOULDERS,
STRAIN, STRAPS,
SUPPLIES.

Y B A C K P A C K Y R R A C Z
F L U Q L M T X E J S S F I Y
S O H P O U N D S K T Z E L I
E A S H O U L D E R S Z N O B
I D T H G I E H A W E S I O A
L S T E K C O P R A H J A H L
P H P D M T S D F S C I P C A
P Y V A E H S T R A I N P S N
U F P S S G S A F E T Y T N C
S W G E T U B I R T S I D X E

Cook's Corner

Reuben Chicken

You'll need:

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1 (16-ounce) can sauerkraut, drained
- 4 slices Swiss cheese
- 1 cup Thousand Island salad dressing



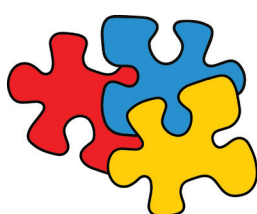
* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Place chicken in a greased 8-by-8-inch square baking pan.
 2. Cover with sauerkraut.
 3. Place Swiss cheese evenly on top.
 4. Pour salad dressing over cheese.
 5. Cover with foil and bake in a preheated 325-degree oven for 1 1/2 hours.
- Serves 4.

Puzzling

Unscramble the words below that remind us of going back to school.



okemrhwo _____
ehatcre _____
sceers _____
cnluh _____

Answers: homework, teacher, recess, lunch.

Mini Jokes



Jimmy: How do you get rich quick?

Jeffy: Eat silver dollar pancakes!

Eco Note



Swarms of spruce budworm moths in two eastern Canadian towns left residents working for days to remove the pests from inside their homes as well as from their screens and windows. A vacuum truck was used to suck up the bugs' stinking carcasses, after they had laid lots of eggs in trees and bushes. Experts were at a loss to explain the infestations.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

Thank You



The Mini Page thanks Katie Riley at the American Occupational Therapy Association for help with this issue.

Teachers:

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html

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