

# Backpacks: What Every Parent Should Know.

Dr. Annie Guillet DC

“Is it normal for young kids and teens to have back pain and headaches?”

**NO! pain is an effect , a body alarm signal, our nervous system is shouting....Something is wrong...get checked!!**

Just like when the check engine light goes off on your dash board do you put a sticker or band-aid over the top of it and pretend it's not there...or hope perhaps that it will turn itself off!

Your human machine is the same; there is no good doing by taking drugs and anti-inflammatory for neck pain, back pain or headaches without knowing the cause of why that alarm is going off.

My name is Annie Guillet and my mission is to educate, check and adjust as many families as possible towards optimal health through natural chiropractic care. When the nervous system is sending pain signals, we check for subluxation first.

Neck pain, low back pain and headaches can result from a subluxation. Subluxations occur when the spinal bones, vertebrae, misalign and create stress on our spinal cord and nerve system, which reduces nerve flow to the organs and muscles.

Unfortunately not everyone is aware of the role Chiropractic plays in children's health and wellness. The question we all need to ask is

**“ Am I doing everything I can to ensure that my children, my grandchildren and all the those I care about reach their optimal potential?”**

When the brain messages cannot reach the tissue cells at 100% we cannot reach our potential. That's why subluxation are so damaging. A chiropractic adjustment relieves pressure on the nervous system. This is why people under regular chiropractic care experience not only less back and neck pain but also well being, better moods, decreased blood pressure, less stress.

**People ask “ How does my child get subluxation?”**

The birth process itself can cause endangering stress to the spinal cord and nervous system as our little body and bones are very soft as we are coming down the birth canal and any additional forces applied like forceps or vacuum extraction or a caesarean section can subluxate the newborn. Events such as numerous body height falls while learning to walk, studying and sitting at school, sporting events and without a doubt heavy backpacks.

Chiropractors have long recognized the spinal health hazards of heavy backpack use. In an effort to reduce backpack related injuries, we offer the following suggestions for parents and students.

As always, have your child examined regularly by a chiropractor so that any subluxation and potential spinal, or postural problems can be addressed and corrected immediately.



## Things to Look for when Buying a Back Pack for your Child

1. Look for backpacks with wide, padded shoulder straps. Narrow straps dig painfully into shoulders and can hinder circulation, causing numbness or tingling in the arms, which over time may cause weakness in the hands. Padded shoulder straps help absorb the load.
2. Look for backpacks with "S" shaped shoulder straps, which will ergonomically contour to your child's body.
3. Consider the weight of the backpack when empty. For example, a canvas backpack will be lighter weight than leather.
4. Look for backpacks with a waist and chest strap. This will help keep the load close to the body and help maintain proper balance.
5. Look for backpacks with a built in back support.
6. Look for backpacks with a lumbar pillow.
7. Make sure the backpack is not too heavy. Students of all ages seem to be carrying heavier loads. Even when worn properly with both straps, leaning forward to com-

pensate for this extra weight can affect the natural curve in the lumbar, or lower back region. Extra weight may cause a rounding of the shoulders and an increased curve in the thoracic, or upper back region. As a result, the student may experience back, shoulder and neck pain.

**A good rule to follow is to carry no more than 10-15% of one's body weight.**

8. Consider purchasing a backpack with wheels.

## Recommendations for Back Pack Use

1. Wear both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder causes a person to lean to one side to compensate for the uneven weight, curving the spine. Over time, this can cause lower and upper back pain, strained shoulders and neck, and even functional scoliosis, or curvature of the spine. Teenage girls are especially susceptible to **scoliosis**.
2. Distribute weight evenly across your back. The more spread out a load is, the less strain it puts on any one part of your body. Load pack so the heaviest items are right next to your back.
3. Snug shoulder straps so the pack fits close to the upper part of your back. The further a backpack's load is from your back, the more it pulls you backward and strains muscles between your shoulders.
4. Use the waist belt, and side/chest straps. Keep the load close to your body. Keeping the pack close to your hips also shifts "work" to your legs.
5. The bottom should rest in the curve of your lower back and the top touch just below the big knob on your neck (vertebral prominence).
6. Neatly pack your backpack, and try to keep items in place.
7. Try to make frequent trips to your locker, between classes, to replace books.

References:

<http://www.icpa4kids.com/>

*From February 12-16th we are having a COW  
-Chiropractic Opportunity Week-*

*Now is the time to get  
Your Child  
checked for subluxation*

9650-8488

*Call for your appointment Today*

