

THE SCHOOL BACKPACK:

MUCH MORE DANGEROUS THAN IT LOOKS



A MAJOR CAUSE OF BACK PAIN IN SCHOOL CHILDREN

Each time a child leaves for school, there it is: their backpack — usually far heavier than it should be, especially during the younger years when spine and bones have not finished growing.

The trap is that the backpack becomes invisible. But the damage an incorrectly packed, fitted or carried one can cause may be considerable, even more so when it is too heavy. Kids are resilient and may be dismissive about your concern. They may also be inclined to sling their backpack over the shoulder, unaware of the long-term consequences that may arise due to carrying an uneven load. For a large number of children though, the pain and fatigue has already set in:

'According to an international study, daily backpack carrying is a frequent cause of discomfort for school children. School backpacks were felt to be heavy by 79.1% of children, to cause fatigue by 65.7%, and to cause back pain by 46.1%'.*

Your chiropractor is well aware of this problem and is uniquely positioned to help parents, students and teachers be more aware of the risks associated with heavy backpacks.

5 Top Tips

- Ensure that both the straps of the backpack are always worn, and are padded.
- Make sure the backpack is the right size for your child, no wider than their chest.
- The backpack shouldn't be worn any lower than the hollow of the lower back with all heavy items packed closest to the spine.
- Pack only essential items ensuring the backpack is no more than 10% of your child's weight, and all the zips are done up.
- Secure the sternum, waist and compression straps, this will help distribute weight evenly.

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Their advice has both a remedial and advisory focus. Each week, some 200,000 people visit Australian chiropractors for many reasons.

Chiropractors undertake comprehensive training consisting of a 5 year university degree and continue with ongoing studies and updates throughout their career.

Talk to your local chiropractor today, and find out more about how they can assist with these issues and take some weight off your shoulders.

* Negrini, S., & Carabalona, R. (2002). Backpacks on! Schoolchildren's Perceptions of Load, Associations with BackPain and Factors Determining the Load. Spine , 27(2), 187-195.