



## DON'T GET WEIGHED DOWN: BACKPACK SAFETY BASICS

Most young people use a backpack at some point in their lives. Backpacks are a great way to carry stuff: books, homework and other items for school, sports gear, or general belongings. But they can also pose problems if they aren't used and worn correctly. Backpacks that are too heavy, aren't worn properly or have uneven weight distribution can cause muscle and joint aches and pains, posture problems, and even injury. Today your child learned about the "Dos and Don'ts of Backpacks" so that he or she can fix current problems and prevent future ones. One example is that your child's backpack should not weigh more than 15 percent of his or her bodyweight.

Your Child's Weight	Maximum Recommended Backpack Weight
40	6
50	7.5
60	9
70	10.5
80	12
90	13.3
100	15
110	16.6
120	18
130	19.5
140	21
150	22.5
160	24
170	25.5
180	27



## IF YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK IS TOO HEAVY

Here are some ways young people can take action if their backpacks get too heavy:

- Clean them out at least once a week
- Pull something out to carry in their arms
- Ask teachers about which items can be left at school

## CHOOSING A BACKPACK

When choosing a backpack look for one that has:

- a padded back. This will reduce back pressure and the chance of items in the backpack digging into your child's back.
- padded, contoured shoulder straps. These will reduce pressure on the chest and shoulders.
- a waist belt. This will help distribute some of the weight to the pelvis.
- compression straps. Compression straps on the sides or bottom of the backpack help it be more stable.
- reflective material. This makes your child more visible to drivers in the early morning and evening hours.