



Back Column

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Improper Use of Backpacks Lead to Chronic Back Pain

Backpacks have made it easy for many Americans to throw in everything but the kitchen sink without realizing they could be throwing out their backs. Millions of students are racing to the school bus or scurrying to their classes with overstuffed backpacks slung over one shoulder. At the same time, more adults have opted for lugging a backpack, rather than a briefcase, to and from the office. While carrying a backpack might seem harmless enough, it can cause some painful back and neck problems for people who don't pack or carry their backpacks properly.

Back pain is pervasive in our society. Eighty percent of all Americans will suffer from low-back pain this year alone. Much of this suffering is brought on by bad habits initiated during our younger years, such as carrying overweight backpacks to school.

A recent survey by Lands' End Direct Merchants found that more than 96 percent of children ages 8 to 12 will carry a backpack to school this year. Of those, nearly one-third will carry their backpack improperly.

Similarly, a recent study con-

ducted in Italy found that the average child carries a backpack that would be the equivalent of a 39 pound backpack for a 176 pound man, or a 29 pound backpack for a 132 pound woman.

What can you do?

The American Chiropractic Association offers the following tips to parents to help prevent the needless pain that backpack misuse could cause the students in your household. (And, now that backpacks have begun replacing briefcases in the workplace, you, too, might want to follow this advice):

- Make sure your child's backpack weighs no more than 5 to 10 percent of his or her body weight. If the backpack is heavier, it will cause your child to begin bending forward in an attempt to support the weight on his or her back, rather than on the shoulders, by the straps.

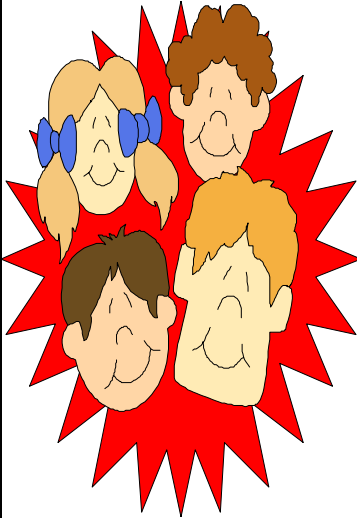
backpack is important. The backpack should never hang more than four inches below the waistline. A backpack that hangs too low increases the weight on the shoulders, causing your child to lean forward when walking.

- A backpack with individualized compartments helps in positioning the contents most effectively. When packing the backpack, make sure that pointed or bulky objects are packed away from the area that will rest on your child's back. An uneven surface rubbing against the back could cause painful blisters.
- Keep in mind that bigger is not necessarily better. The more room there is in a backpack, the more your child will carry.

- It is important that your child wear both shoulder straps. Lugging the backpack around by one shoulder strap can cause the disproportionate shift of weight to one side, leading to neck and muscle spasms, as well as low back pain.
- Padded straps are very important. Non-padded straps are uncomfortable, and can dig into your child's shoulders.
- The shoulder straps should also be adjustable.
- If they are too loose the backpack can dangle uncomfortably and cause spinal misalignment and pain.
- If the backpack is still too heavy, talk to your child's teacher. It might be possible to leave the heaviest books at school.
- Talk to your child about the proper use of backpacks so they understand why it's so important. A child who is educated early in life on the importance of ergonomics can apply this knowledge later in life—at home or in the office—and will be happier and healthier as a result.

Source: www.mercola.com

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Welcome New Patients

Here are the new patients that became members of our practice recently! We'd like to welcome you publicly and wish you all the best!

Heather Jeffries

Mary Anne Foster

Doug Foster

Rick Breedlove

Jeff Cadavero
(Referred by Dr. Showalter...Thanks)

Darlene Smeltzer

Laromie Boyd

Melanie Boyle

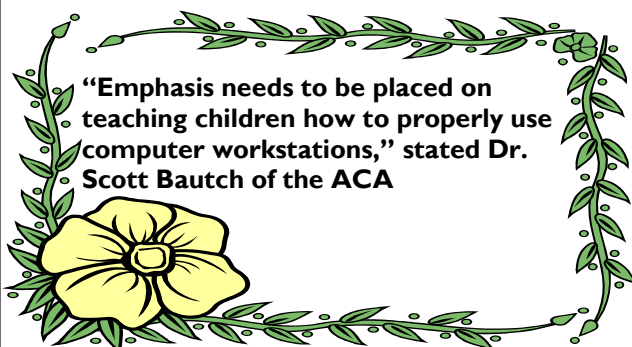
Nancy Bandy (Referred by Deb Bandy..Thanks)

Thanks to all of our friends who referred patients to us. We want to say "thank you" in a special way. For each person you refer that becomes a patient, we give a "referral reward". Ask Diane how you can receive an extra bonus for sharing the good news about chiropractic.

Children Need to Practice Good Computer Ergonomics, Too

At least 70 percent of America's 30 million elementary school students use computers, according to a recent *New York Times* article. As a result of this increased usage, doctors of chiropractic are treating more young patients suffering from the effects of working at computer stations that are either designed for adults or poorly designed for children. Many children are already suffering from repetitive motion injuries (RMI) such as carpal tunnel syndrome and chronic pain in the hands, back, neck and shoulder.

A recently published study conducted by a team of researchers from Cornell University found that 40 percent of the elementary school children they studied used computer workstations that put them at potential risk. The remaining 60 percent scored in a range indicating "some concern." "Emphasis needs to be placed on teaching children how to properly use computer workstations," stated Dr. Scott Bautch, president of the American Chiropractic Association's Council on Occupational Health. "Poor work habits and computer workstations that don't fit a child's body during the developing years can have harmful physical effects that can last a lifetime. Parents need to be just as concerned about their children's interaction with their computer workstations as they are with any activities that may affect their children's long-term health," added Dr. Bautch. Source: www.mercola.com



"Emphasis needs to be placed on teaching children how to properly use computer workstations," stated Dr. Scott Bautch of the ACA



How are Kids Using Computers & the Internet?

- Computer skills are important to do well in school and future jobs
- Kids are using computers and the Internet more and more in school, at the library, in their home and in after-school activities.
- Nearly 10 million kids are online in the U.S. and many more around the world.
- Two out of three public libraries have computers and internet access.

Source: www.kids.getnetwise.org

Lauren's Recipe Corner

Health Nut Oatmeal Cookies

2/3 cup butter, softened

1 cup brown sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 1/2 cups rolled oats

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 chopped hazelnuts

1/4 cup sunflower seeds

2 tablespoons flax seeds

1/2 cup wheat germ

Directions

- 1 Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
- 2 In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg, then stir in the vanilla and nutmeg.
- 3 In a separate bowl, combine the oats, flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, hazelnuts, sunflower seeds, flax seeds and wheat germ; gradually stir into the creamed mixture.
- 4 Drop by rounded spoonfuls, a couple of inches apart, onto cookie sheets.
- 5 Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely. Enjoy!

Source: www.allrecipes.com

Question of the Month:

What percentage of children ages 8-12 will carry backpacks to school this year?

- A. 23%
- B. 87%
- C. 96%
- D. 48%

The first patient to call with the correct answer will win a FREE massage and T-shirt. (once per patient, please). The answer to last month's question was: B. "Get on the right path." There was no winner this month. Our **Patient of the Month** for August is **Stephanie Parker**.

Congratulations! **Stephanie** will receive a \$40 gift certificate to the

Hamilton Place Mall area.

A random number is picked each month so everyone has a chance to win!! *Be sure and tune in to 102.3 FM every Wednesday night from 7-8 PM for Optimum Health Hour. Dr. Showalter will be discussing health and chiropractic topics. Call in your questions at 267-1023.*

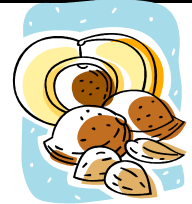


Five Ways to Boost Your Energy

- 1 Do 10 minutes of exercise.
- 2 Eat a balanced diet with fruit and vegetables.
- 3 Get enough sleep.
- 4 Schedule time for yourself.
- 5 Laugh.

Source: *Woman's Day* 04/01/04

Vitamin E—A Necessary Antioxidant

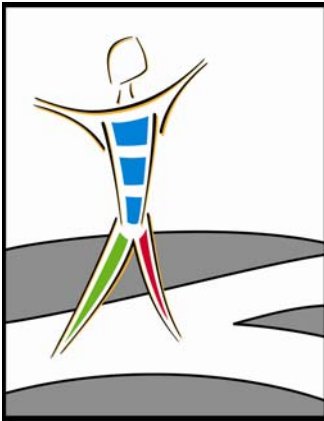


Vitamin E is a fat-soluble vitamin present in many foods, especially certain fats and oils. It is one of a number of nutrients called antioxidants. Some other well known antioxidants include vitamin C and beta-carotene. Antioxidants are nutrients that block some of the damage caused by toxic by-products released when the body transforms food into energy or fights off infection. The build up of these by-products over time is largely responsible for the aging process and can contribute to the development of various health conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and a host of inflammatory conditions like arthritis. Antioxidants provide some protection against these conditions and also help reduce the damage to the body caused by toxic chemicals and pollutants.

Vitamin E deficiency can be seen in people unable to absorb fat properly. Such conditions include pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas), cystic fibrosis, and biliary diseases (illnesses of the gallbladder and biliary ducts). Symptoms of deficiency include muscle weakness, loss of muscle mass, abnormal eye movements, impaired vision, and unsteady gait. Eventually, kidney and liver function may be compromised. In addition, severe vitamin E deficiency can be associated with serial miscarriages and premature delivery in pregnant women.

The richest source of vitamin E is wheat germ. Other foods that contain a significant amount of vitamin E include liver, eggs, nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, and walnuts); sunflower seeds; corn-oil margarine; mayonnaise; cold-pressed vegetable oils, including olive, corn, safflower, soybean, cottonseed, and canola; dark green leafy vegetables like spinach and kale; greens (beet, collard, mustard, turnip) sweet potatoes; avocado, asparagus and yams.

Source: www.parentsplace.com



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We're on the web!

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***Contact us today to subscribe to our free monthly
newsletter! Listen every Wednesday 7-8pm on
talk radio 102.3FM for Optimum Health Hour***

It's Kid's Day!

Our office believes in promoting Family Wellness.

The First Wednesday of EVERY month is Kid's Day at Showalter Chiropractic!! This applies to any child **14 and under** of a current patient. Bring them in on this day for a free adjustment. Please call ahead of time for an appointment (they go fast)!

