

HEALTH

Student Backpacks Are Literally a Big Pain

NewsUSA

(NU) - Sponsored News - Beware the overstuffed school backpack!

If you wonder why more kids than ever before are complaining about back and neck pain – and you should be, what with classes starting up again – a likely reason is that they're weighed down by backpacks crammed with everything from textbooks to laptops to musical instruments.

Consider this: “The federal Consumer Product Safety Commission calculated that carrying a 12-pound backpack to and from school and lifting it 10 times a day for an entire school year puts a cumulative load on youngsters’ bodies of 21,600 pounds,” The New York Times reported, “or the equivalent of six mid-sized cars.”

No wonder experts warn that kids are putting themselves at risk of even more serious conditions like stress fractures in the back, inflammation of growth cartilage and nerve damage in the neck and shoulders.

“Over time, the heavy weight of a backpack can cause an unnatural alignment of the spine as students are forced to offset the pressure by arching the back or bending forward at the hips,” said Sherry McAllister, DC, executive vice president of the not-



Doctors of chiropractic deal with backpacks' consequences.

for-profit Foundation for Chiropractic Progress, adding that students who are already prone to slouching may experience further pain from sitting at a desk for prolonged periods.

Doctors of chiropractic, who have a minimum seven years of higher learning, specialize in providing drug-free, hands-on care that helps to naturally align and strengthen the spine. And since they also routinely advise on proper body positioning – especially important to ensure while children are still growing – the foundation knows from whence it speaks on these backpack-related tips:

- Limit packs to no more than 10 percent of a kid's weight.
- Packs with padded straps and multiple compartments help distribute weight.