

PARISH NURSE CORNER

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TIPS FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL BACKPACK USE

A school backpack that is too heavy or worn improperly can lead to an aching back and shoulders, weakened muscles, tingling arms, strain on the spine, and stooped postures.

Here are some tips from the American Occupational Therapy Association to help children avoid health problems from wearing a backpack.

"Pack It Light"

- ♦ A child should not carry more than 15 percent of his or her body weight in a backpack.
- ♦ Heaviest items should be closest to the child's back in the back of the pack.
- ♦ If the backpack is too heavy, have the child hand carry a book.
- ♦ If the backpack is regularly too heavy, consider a book bag with wheels, if allowed in school.

"Wear It Right"

- ♦ Choose the right size pack for your child. The bottom of the pack should not rest more than four inches below a child's waist.
- ♦ Select a backpack with well-padded shoulder straps.
- ♦ Wear both shoulder straps.
- ♦ Wear the waist belt if the backpack has one.
- ♦ Adjust the straps so the backpack fits snugly with the bottom of the pack in the curve of the lower back.

May the Lord watch over you throughout the coming school year.

God's Blessing,
Peggy Taylor, RN
Parish Nurse

