

Wish You Well



Backpack Safety Tips

August 2012

Although there are very few studies and the medical literature does not agree on the specific guidelines for backpack safety to avoid back pain, parents can use common sense to reduce the chance that their child or teen will suffer back pain due to carrying a backpack.

These backpack design features will help reduce the chance of back pain:

- Lightweight material (canvas as opposed to leather)
- Two padded, wide (2-inches), adjustable shoulder straps on the backpack
- Padded back
- Individualized compartments
- Hip strap, waist belt or frame to redistribute the weight of the backpack from the shoulders and back to the pelvis
- Wheels so that the backpack can be pulled rather than carried

Also, use these proper ways to load and wear your backpack to avoid pain:

- Always use both shoulders straps and wear the backpack on the back rather than over one shoulder
- Pack heaviest objects in the backpack first so they are carried lower and closest to the body
- Adjust the straps to fit the backpack snugly to the child's body, holding the bottom of the backpack 2 inches above the waist and keeping the top below the base of the skull. Do not carry the backpack low near the buttocks.

You may also want to consider applying a guideline backpack weight limit as a percent of the child's body weight. The American Physical Therapy Association suggest 15-20%; the American Chiropractic Association advises 5-10%. Coach your child to carry only the books needed in the backpack, leaving unnecessary items at home and making frequent trips to his/her locker during the day. Also, train your child to clean out their backpack at least once a week.

How Does My Back Respond To A Backpack?

Using a backpack allows a person to carry more items than would be possible by the arms and hands alone. The risk, however, is overload, which can strain the back, neck or shoulders. The back compensates for any load applied to it for an extended period of time. A heavy weight carried in backpacks can:

- Cause a person to lean forward, reducing balance and making it easier to fall
- Distort the natural curves in the middle and lower back, causing muscle strain and irritation to the spine joints and the rib cage.
- Cause rounding of the shoulders

Carrying backpacks over one shoulder will make muscles strain to compensate for the uneven weight. The spine leans to the opposite side, stressing the middle back, ribs and lower back more on one side than the other. This type of muscle imbalance can cause muscle strain, muscle spasm and back pain in the short term and speed development of back problems later in life if not corrected. The weight can also pull on the neck muscles, contributing to headache, neck pain and arm pain.



TAKE SAFETY ON YOUR PICNIC

Top 3 reasons why picnic foods can be hazardous:

- Food receives a lot of handling. Picnic foods - such as potato or macaroni salads, sandwich fillings, hamburger patties and cut watermelon - often receive a lot of handling during preparation. Handling increases the risk of contamination with harmful bacteria.
- Food is not cooled rapidly after cooking. Some common picnic foods require precooking and are prepared in large quantities. Cooked foods must be rapidly cooled by putting in shallow pans and refrigerating immediately after cooking so harmful bacteria does not grow. Warm temperatures promote bacterial growth.
- Equipment to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold is usually not used and food sits out for long periods of time. Warm temperatures support the growth of harmful bacteria. The longer the food is at warm temperatures, the more likely food borne illness will result.

What to do with leftovers?

- Because most picnic leftovers have been sitting out for more than one hour and have had many people handling them, **THROW THEM OUT!** The more time that food has been sitting at unsafe temperatures, the more likely harmful bacteria has grown.
- Cold foods kept in a cooler that still has ice may be safe. If the ice is melted, throw out the food. Cold water cannot keep foods cold enough to be safe.

If you cannot keep cold food cold and hot food hot, take foods that do not need refrigeration:

- Peanut butter sandwiches
- Dried fruit, nuts, unpeeled fresh fruit
- Jelly sandwiches
- Unopened cans of food, meat, fish or fruit
- Cookies and cakes
- Crackers



Prevent Contamination:

Keep foods covered to prevent contamination by insects. Many insects can carry harmful bacteria and viruses on their bodies.

Source: www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/foodsci/ext/pubs/picnic.html

Tex Mex Black Bean Wrap Sandwiches

Ingredients:

1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed	1/3 cup chunky salsa
1 green bell pepper, thinly sliced	1 tomato, thinly sliced
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese	1/2 cup shredded Pepper Jack cheese
1 avocado	1/3 cup sour cream
1 teaspoon lemon juice	4 (8 inch) flour tortillas

Preparation:

In medium bowl, place black beans and mash with a fork. Leave some beans whole for a chunky texture. Add salsa and mix well. Prepare bell pepper, tomato and cheeses.

In small bowl, mash avocado with sour cream and lemon juice.

Spread bean mixture over tortillas and top with vegetables and cheeses. Place some avocado mixture over cheeses. Roll up sandwiches and serve.

Source: www.busycooks.about.com

The Faith Community Nursing program began in October of 2008 as an outreach of Twin County Regional Healthcare. This program is just one way TCRH fulfills its mission to promote, preserve and restore the health of our community.

For more information on the Faith Community Nursing program, please call (276) 236-5433



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