

Backpack the right way

Choose the right fit of backpack for your child. Do not make the backpack too heavy. The wrong fit and a heavy backpack can give your child “back pain, neck pain and headaches,” says Julia Brooks. Brooks is a physiotherapist at Alberta Children’s Hospital.

The right fit

The right backpack for your child should:

- be a size that is as wide as your child
- fit your child’s back from the top of the shoulders to the top of the pelvis
- have two wide straps
- have chest straps if possible

The right weight

Brooks says that children should not carry more than 15% of their body weight. For example, if your child is 100 pounds, your child should not carry more than 15 pounds in their backpack.



Photo: Pexels

Tip

Pack an empty water bottle to lighten your child’s backpack.

Adapted from CBC News

Exercise

Put checks in the boxes for your answers. Some questions have more than one answer.

1. The wrong fit and a heavy backpack can give your child

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> back pain | <input type="checkbox"/> headaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stomachache | <input type="checkbox"/> sore arms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> knee problems | <input type="checkbox"/> neck pain |

2. Julia Brooks is a

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> physiotherapist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doctor | <input type="checkbox"/> psychologist |

3. The right backpack for your child should

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> have one strap | <input type="checkbox"/> have chest straps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be as wide as your child's body | <input type="checkbox"/> have many zippers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be larger than your child's back | <input type="checkbox"/> not go lower than your child's pelvis |

4. Children should not carry _____ of their body weight.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 pounds | <input type="checkbox"/> less than 15% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more than 15% | <input type="checkbox"/> 100 pounds |

5. You should pack an empty water bottle in your child's backpack, not a filled one.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Answers

1. back pain
 headaches
 neck pain
2. physiotherapist
3. be as wide as your child's body
 have chest straps
 not o lower than your child's pelvis
4. more than 15%
5. Yes