

CHILD BACK HEALTH

Chiropractic is just as important for children as it is for adults. The habits they form now can affect the rest of their lives. Here are some tips about how to implement good back health in your child's daily life. As a parent, you should lead by example and take note of these guidelines:



POSTURE



BACKPACK CONTROL



SPORTS



POSTURE

As they spend more time in front of computers and playing games in front of the television, it becomes clear that some children are developing poor posture. Follow the advice below to help you take control of their posture and habits at an early age.

Sit Up. An adjustable chair with an armrest will shift their weight closer to the center of their spine and allow them to sit up higher. Keep the monitor at eye level to avoid leaning forward to focus on the screen.

Take Breaks. Teach your children to take breaks and get up and move around regularly. Sitting in one position is never good for circulation, and blood flow must continue in order to prevent aches.

Go Outside. Try to get them interested in outdoor sports that promote strong back muscles and posture.

Sleep Tight. Ensure your children sleep on low pillows so their necks are not needlessly strained. It is helpful to teach kids to sleep on their backs instead of their sides so their spines remain straight.

Keep a Healthy Balance. Make sure your kids get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and reduces the risk of joint and muscle-related injuries. Avoid sugar-loaded, caffeinated and carbonated drinks.

DID *you* KNOW

Chiropractic care for acute conditions is usually covered by your health care plan. Patients may have some out-of-pocket costs at the time of their appointment.



BACKPACK CONTROL

Take note of your child's backpack and what they carry around, such as sports equipment and instruments. What they are lugging around can have an immense impact on their posture and back health.

Size. A backpack should never be wider or longer than your child's torso and should not hang more than four inches below their waistline. A backpack that hangs too low increases strain on the shoulders.

Padded Straps. Non-padded straps are not only uncomfortable, but also can place unnecessary pressure on the neck and shoulder muscles.

Strap Usage. Lugging a heavy backpack by one strap can cause a disproportionate shift of weight to one side, leading to neck and muscle spasms, low-back pain and poor posture.

Adjust Straps. The shoulder straps should be adjustable so the backpack can be fitted to your child's body. The backpack should be evenly centered in the middle of your child's back.

Padded Back. A padded back not only provides increased comfort, but also protects your child from being poked by sharp edges of school supplies (pencils, rulers, notebooks, etc.) inside of the backpack.

Compartmentalize. A backpack with individualized compartments helps distribute the contents most effectively. Try to place the heaviest items closest to the body.



SPORTS

Make sure your child is safe and prepared for sports. It is very important to stretch before and after any sporting event. Stretching is a key element that should also be incorporated into all activities.

Never stretch cold muscles. Always encourage children to warm up before they begin flexibility exercises. Young athletes should warm up their muscles by performing 5-10 minutes of moderate aerobic activity so they can stretch safely.

Start on the floor. Young athletes should stretch in a reclined or seated position first. Children are less experienced when it comes to maintaining proper posture and balance. The less they have to think about these factors, the more they can focus on correct stretching.

Hold the stretch. If pre-pubescent athletes perform traditional stretching exercises, teach them to hold each stretch for no more than 10 seconds. Have teen athletes stretch all of the major muscles and hold each stretch for 15-20 seconds.

Correct breathing. Children sometimes hold their breath subconsciously while stretching. Remind children to breathe slowly and deeply throughout stretching to help relax the muscles and increase blood flow.

GET *the* FACTS

Chiropractors are known for their expertise in caring for patients with back pain, neck pain and headaches. They also treat injuries and disorders involving the muscles, ligaments and joints.