

# National School Backpack Awareness Day

Wednesday,  
September 20



Pack It Light, Wear It Right

A public health  
awareness event  
sponsored by:

The Fund To  
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## Backpack Facts

### What's All the Flap About?

- More than 40 million students in the United States carry school backpacks.<sup>1</sup>
- More than 7,000 emergency room visits in 2001 were related to backpacks and book bags. Approximately half of those injuries occurred in children 5 to 14 years old.<sup>2</sup>
- It is recommended that a loaded backpack weigh no more than 15% (about one-sixth) of a student's body weight (for a student weighing 100 pounds, this means that the backpack should weigh no more than 15 pounds).<sup>3</sup>
- The average student carries a backpack weighing almost one fourth of his or her body weight. Three out of 10 students typically carry backpacks weighing up to one third of their body weight at least once a week.<sup>4</sup>
- In one study with American students, 6 out of 10 students ages 9 to 20 reported chronic back pain related to heavy backpacks. Among students who carried backpacks weighing 15% of their body weight or less, only 2 in 10 reported pain.<sup>5</sup>
- The way backpacks are worn has an impact. Lower positioning of the backpack approximates the body's center of gravity and has the least effect on posture.<sup>6</sup>
- In a study on the effect of backpack education on student behavior and health, nearly 8 out of 10 middle-school students who changed how they loaded and wore their backpacks reported less pain and strain in their backs, necks, and shoulders.<sup>7</sup>

#### Sources

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