



SEPTEMBER '08: BACK TO SCHOOL ISSUE!

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Looking for a fun way to keep stress away and spend some quality time with your kids? Plan family activities and give your children something to look forward to other than summer vacation. It's good for them and it's good for you!



PACKING UP BACK PAIN!

Although your children will learn a lot during their time in the classroom, there will be days when homework will tag along when they come home. This can mean heavy books and notebooks piled into one small backpack. To keep your kids healthy, it's important to remember to keep backpack weight at bay.

First, don't let your child tote more than 10-15% of his or her body weight in the backpack. An easy way to test how much a backpack actually weighs is to place it on your bathroom scale. While it might not be exact, it'll tell you if you're creeping into the red zone and putting your child at risk of developing back pain.

When shopping for the perfect backpack, buy a lightweight one with padded shoulders, a padded back, and a padded waist strap. The bottom of the pack should sit a few inches above the back of the waist.

You should also encourage your child to wear

both shoulder straps to evenly distribute the weight.

It's even important to arrange backpack items in a particular way.

Teach your child to pack the heaviest items in the center. Encourage him or her to lighten the load in a school locker during the day. And don't forget to use a pack's pockets. Distribute the load throughout all the different compartments to even out the weight. Avoid putting all of your child's books in one area so that the backpack becomes top- or bottom-heavy.

Rolling backpacks are catching on, but may be a bit more difficult to handle in the ice and snow. These packs can also be a problem if your child's school has stairs, so check with the school before making your purchase.



JUICY FUEL FOR SCHOOL

Eating fruits and vegetables helps keep kids healthy and protects against disease, but a busy schedule can make it difficult to consume as much produce as experts advise. Fortunately, juices can help them squeeze in those extra nutrients in half the time.

In fact, just six ounces—just 3/4 cup of juice—counts as one whole serving of a fruit or vegetable.

Many fruit juices contain potassium, which helps balance sodium in the diet and lowers blood pressure. Vitamin C in some juices helps heal cuts and bruises. Carbohydrates from natu-



ral sugars in 100% juice provide energy, and the water content helps children meet fluid requirements. For a busy child, these are very valuable benefits!

When shopping for juice, always read the label. Only 100% juice can be labeled "juice." Anything less may be called a "cocktail," "punch," or "blend." These could contain as little as 10% juice, with the remainder being water or added sweeteners.

Be sure to try all of the delicious varieties available today. Pomegranate and blueberry are great choices to start with, and trying them will help expand your child's palate!

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PATIENTS KNOW THEY HAVE
BEEN HELPED AT PTC!

Did you know that young children catch about 8 colds per year? Small steps to fight germs can help keep your child healthy. Start by purchasing mechanical pencils. Studies have shown that the dirtiest thing in any classroom is the community pencil sharpener.



CHEERING FOR SPINAL HEALTH

With school starting again, your children and grandchildren will probably want to get involved in school sports and activities. Exercise is great for kids, but it's always important to be mindful of risks for injury.



In fact, did you know there is a high incidence of disc bulging/herniations in young gymnasts and cheerleaders?

These types of injuries are typically thought to happen to an older, more sedentary population. The truth is—any injury occurs when the activity or force exceeds the body's ability to adapt.

In adolescent population, the growing bones, muscles, ligaments, and tendons often cannot adapt to the high forces placed on them during activities that

involve extreme backward bending.

These types of movements are dangerous when done vigorously in high repetitions and the body becomes too fatigued to allow for proper protection

of the back. Other contributing factors to spinal overload include incorrect technique, weak abdominals, poor leg stamina, and poor hip flexibility.

If you think your child could be at risk for injury, talking with a PTC therapist can help. Physical therapists are trained to access all the pertinent factors and provide a plan for helping young spines stay safe, healthy, and happy for years to come. If you have specific questions about your child's activities, please call the PTC staff.

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