

# Journeys in Health

Volume 1, Issue 4

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## In This Issue

Back to School Special!

[Carry it Correctly!](#)

[Boosting Energy Levels - at School](#)



Drs. Jessica and Phil Szalowski

### Upcoming Events:

#### **Patient Appreciation Day!!!**

**Wednesday Sept. 8th** all day here at the office - bring a non-perishable food item and receive a free visit (existing as well as new patients)

All food will be donated to the local food pantry!

#### **Spinal Care Classes**

Tuesday 9/7 and Tuesday 9/21 at 6:30 pm

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Comments?

Questions?

Just hit reply and ask the doctors

## Carry it Correctly!



Well, it's time to head back to school! For many kids, one of the most exciting things about this time of year is all the new clothes and gear. One very important item that deserves extra attention is your child's backpack. You want to be sure that they have a good one, that it's packed properly and that they are wearing it correctly. An improperly worn backpack can promote poor posture

and set the stage for long-term damage to their developing spines.

The most spine-friendly backpacks have two thickly-padded straps and a waist buckle, all of which should be used! When the pack is slung over only one shoulder it misaligns the spine and changes overall posture. Also, you'll want to be sure that the heaviest items are packed closest to the body to avoid extra strain. Another good general rule is that the pack should weigh no more than 15% of your child's body weight. Most backpacks are packed far too heavy. This often causes the child to lean forward, which results in increased stress on the back and neck. Try to encourage your child to stop by his/her locker between classes instead of carrying everything at once, and see if extra copies of textbooks are available so they don't have to be lugged back and forth from school.

You can do a quick check of your child's posture at home. First, stand behind your child and have your child close his/her eyes. See if ears, shoulders and hips are level. If not, there may be an underlying spinal curvature. Also check the side view: the ears, shoulders, hips and knees should all be in line with one another. Then do this same quick check with the child wearing the backpack to be sure that his or her posture is still good. If you have any questions about backpack safety, feel free to ask Dr. Jessica or Dr.

a question to be answered in the next newsletter. Phil.

## Useful Links

[About Us](#)

[Testimonials](#)

[New Patient Forms](#)

## Boosting Energy Levels - at School

One of the important things to consider as the kids head back to the classroom is what they'll be fueling those brains with. Many times what is being served in the cafeteria is not an optimal choice, and if you pack lunch yourself you at least know what your child is eating. In general, you want to avoid a lot of processed foods in your child's lunch or snacks and offer more whole

food items. Processed (packaged) foods usually contain a lot of preservatives, sugar (especially high fructose corn syrup) and food dyes, which can have detrimental effects



on our health. Including foods found in their most natural state will help you avoid these things. Another key to a great school lunch is protein. Having enough protein is essential to satisfy hunger and keep energy levels up without the high and crash of sugar, which will interfere with optimal learning. Besides meats, good sources of protein are eggs (hard-boiled are easy to pack in a lunch cooler), peanut butter and yogurt (Greek yogurt in particular).

Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables are the best choices for snacks. Pre-slicing fruits and veggies usually makes them more appealing and having a "dipping sauce" of peanut butter or yogurt is added fun for youngsters. If going from having a lot of packaged junk foods to a lunch full of whole foods is too much of a shock for your child (particularly if they are older), there are some decent packaged foods out there to make the transition easier. Substitutions are a good way to start. Use whole wheat bread instead of white for sandwiches (there are even brands that look like white bread to ease the switch). Look for organic or natural versions of their favorite cookies, chips and bars so that you can make more gradual changes to their diet as their desire for junk foods lessens. Just remember to always read the ingredients, companies have gotten very good at marketing food as 'natural' when in fact the only thing that is natural about the food is the brand name.

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