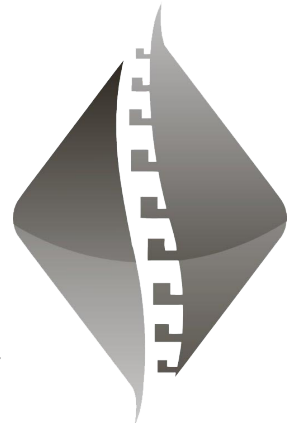


# VAN DAM CHIROPRACTIC

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## BACKPACK SAFETY TIPS

Back pain is pervasive among American adults, however it is not uncommon among children and teens either. In a new and disturbing trend, young children are suffering from back pain much earlier than previous generations, and the use of overweight backpacks is a contributing factor, according to the American Chiropractic Association (ACA).

"In my own practice, I have noticed a marked increase in the number of young children who are complaining about back, neck and shoulder pain," said Dr. Scott Bautch, a member of ACA's Council on Occupational Health. "The first question I ask these patients is, 'Do you carry a backpack to school?' Almost always, the answer is 'yes.'"

This new back pain trend among youngsters isn't surprising when you consider the disproportionate amounts of weight they carry in their backpacks - often slung over just one shoulder. According to Dr. Bautch, a study conducted in Italy found that the average child carries a backpack that would be the equivalent of a 39-pound burden for a 176-pound man, or a 29-pound load for a 132-pound woman. Of those children carrying heavy backpacks to school, 60 percent had experienced back pain as a result.

According to Dr. Bautch, preliminary results of studies conducted in France show that the longer a child wears a backpack, the longer it takes for a curvature or deformity of the spine to correct itself. "The

question that needs to be addressed next is, 'Does it ever return to normal?'" Dr. Bautch added.

The results of these types of studies are

especially important as more and more school districts - many of them in urban areas - remove lockers from the premises, forcing students to carry their books with them all day long.

The problem has become so widespread, in fact, that some states have passed legislation that would force school districts to develop ways of reducing the weight of students' backpacks. ACA believes that limiting the backpack's weight to no more than 10 percent of a child's body weight and urging the use of ergonomically correct backpacks are possible solutions.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

ACA offers the following tips to help prevent the needless pain that backpack misuse could cause the students in your household.

- Make sure your child's backpack weighs no more than 5 to 10 percent of his or her body weight. A heavier backpack will cause your child to bend forward in an attempt to support the weight on his



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your child to lean forward when walking.

- A backpack with individualized compartments helps in positioning the contents most effectively. Make sure that pointy or bulky objects are packed away from the area that will rest on your child's back.
- Bigger is not necessarily better. The more room there is in a backpack, the more your child will carry-and the heavier the backpack will be.
- Urge your child to wear both shoulder straps. Lugging the backpack around by one strap can cause the disproportionate shift of weight to one side, leading to neck and muscle spasms, as well as low-back pain.
- Wide, padded straps are very important. Non-padded straps are uncomfortable, and can dig into your child's shoulders.
- The shoulder straps should be adjustable so the backpack can be fitted to your child's body. Straps that are too loose can cause the backpack to dangle uncomfortably and cause spinal misalignment and pain.
- If the backpack is still too heavy, talk to your child's teacher. Ask if your child could leave the heaviest books at school, and bring home only lighter hand-out materials or workbooks.
- Although the use of rollerpacks - or backpacks on wheels - has become popular in recent years, ACA is now recommending that they be used cautiously and on a limited basis by only those students who are not physically able to carry a backpack. Some school districts have begun banning the use of rollerpacks because they clutter hallways, resulting in dangerous trips and falls.

If you or your child experiences any pain or discomfort resulting from backpack use, consider visiting a doctor of chiropractic (DC). DCs are licensed and trained to diagnose and treat patients of all ages and will use a gentler type of treatment for children. In addition, DCs can also prescribe exercises designed to help children develop strong muscles, along with instruction in good nutrition, posture and sleeping habits.(1)



## CHIROPRACTIC Q & A:

### Question:

**Do I need to see a chiropractor for the rest of my life?**

### Answer:

No, only for as long as you'd like to remain healthy. That might seem like a coy answer but life is constantly giving us stress – whether it be from gravity, emotional issues or toxins in the environment. In order to deal with these stresses, we need to be functioning at our optimum. A balanced body structure, free from nerve pressure (subluxations), is essential for you to live your fullest.

These stresses quietly build up. See your chiropractor for a “stress-release” from subluxations and you and your family will be healthier.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Your brain extends down your back as your spinal cord – a collection of billions of nerves wrapped in a tight bundle.

Messages from your brain travel down nerves through your spinal cord, branch out and reach all your muscles, glands, joints, ligaments and organs. This communication is essential for ideal health.

It's so important that your spinal cord is surrounded by bones – your spinal column – permitting movement plus providing protection. Sometimes your spinal bones lock up or subluxate and irritate the very nerves they are supposed to protect. The result can be disease or body malfunction.

The goal of your chiropractor is to locate these areas of stress – subluxations – that cause body malfunction, and correct them. DC means more than Doctor of Chiropractic – it means Doctor of Cause.



## RESEARCH AND CHIROPRACTIC

THERE SEEMS TO BE NO END TO THE CONDITIONS THAT RESPOND TO CHIROPRACTIC CARE — PHYSICAL AS WELL AS PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS.

THAT IS BECAUSE CHIROPRACTIC DOES NOT “TREAT” A PARTICULAR CONDITION. CHIROPRACTIC CARE “TREATS” OR MORE ACCURATELY “CORRECTS” A SERIOUS INTERFERENCE TO BRAIN, NERVOUS SYSTEM AND ENERGY FUNCTION KNOWN AS THE SUBLUXATION.



NO MATTER WHAT CONDITION YOU OR A LOVED ONE MAY HAVE, YOU WILL ALWAYS FUNCTION BETTER WHEN FREE FROM SUBLUXATIONS. CHIROPRACTORS ARE UNIQUELY TRAINED TO LOCATE AND CORRECT SUBLUXATIONS. ENJOY THIS MONTH'S CASES AND SEE MORE NEXT MONTH.

**Urinary incontinence in a pregnant patient.** The patient presented for chiropractic care during the second trimester of pregnancy with complaints of urinary incontinence of more than three years' duration.

Her history revealed a previous traumatic birth with severe perineal tearing immediately preceding the onset of her incontinence problem. She was unable to hold much urine and would frequently urinate on herself when sneezing or coughing.

The patient was diagnosed with vertebral subluxation of the sacral and lumbar region, as well as incoordination and muscle spasms.

Chiropractic adjustments were utilized to correct her sacral and pelvic subluxations. After six office visits, she reported complete resolution of her urinary incontinence. (2)

**A three-year-old with autism.** A three-year-old autistic boy had a history of chronic constipation, fussy eating, easy gagging and vomiting, poor sleeping habits, poor weight gain and hyper-sensitivity to touch.



Chiropractic care for vertebral subluxation was provided for 9 visits over 12 weeks. The boy showed improvement in behavior, communication and sociability as his subluxations were reduced. (3)

**Sporadic hemiplegic migraine.** A 36-year-old woman had been suffering from off-and-on hemiplegic (side of head) migraines (SHM) since she was 17. Her symptoms included numbness and paralysis on the left side of her body including her face. She was prescribed Topamax™ and Celexa™ by her MD with no improvement.



Chiropractic examination revealed subluxations of her lower neck (cervical spine), upper thoracic spine (mid-back) and pelvis. She had four chiropractic adjustments. Her longstanding migraines completely resolved. (4)



**Van Dam Chiropractic would like to thank our patients for their many referrals of friends and family to our office.**

**As a special thank-you, if you refer someone to Van Dam Chiropractic and they put down your name as the referral Dr. Van Dam will send out a \$10 GIFT CARD TO STARBUCKS**  
We know there are a lot of choices of doctors for your healthcare and we thank-you for choosing us.

## REFERENCES

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