

Children's Health Minute

Air Dates: Week of August 13, 2006

"Kids and Backpacks. Beware!"

Dr. Hellerstedt: Are heavy backpacks harming our kids?

Hi, I'm Dr. John Hellerstedt with the Children's Health Minute -- connecting families with Children's Medicaid and CHIP.

Experts say you should not carry more than twenty percent of your body weight, however, some students routinely carry 30 to 50 percent. This may not cause long-term problems for most kids, but if your child has a pre-existing back problem, such as pain due to muscle strain, it could prolong the recovery period.

To be safe, children should wear backpacks with two straps, one over each shoulder, rather than just one. Balancing the load decreases back strain. Using a backpack with luggage rollers is an even better idea.

Announcer: Health insurance is key to keeping your kids healthy. Call toll-free 1-877-KIDS NOW to apply or when it's time to renew your CHIP or Children's Medicaid. Six months of coverage for all your children costs just 50 dollars or less, but most families pay little or nothing. That's 1-877-KIDS NOW.