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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Back Pain: No Longer Just For Kids

Adults are not the only ones who suffer from back pain. In fact 60% of children experience back pain before they reach age 18. In addition to falls and accidents that kids experience, many of these back pain episodes are due to backpacks that are overloaded or poorly designed and from poor posture while working at a computer.

For example, more than 6,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year for injuries related to lugging heavy backpacks -- and most are under 14 years of age. In addition, backpack-related injuries are up 256 percent since 1996.

Chronic pain can have long term affects on children, on their relationships, developmental abilities and school attendance. Therefore, parents and kids alike are taking action on how to relieve back pain and prevent it in the future. For example, many parents are investing in ergonomically designed backpacks for their children, such as the Obus Form or the AirPacks backpacks available at Relax The Back. These ergonomically designed backpacks take a proactive approach to back health by redistributing the load which reduces back and shoulder tension caused by heavy loads by as much as 80%.

Another major cause of kids' back pain is due to the extended period of time they sit at a computer screen. Millions of children are using computers every day, at school and at home, for education and recreation, and often for 2-3 hours at a time daily. Poor posture, on top of a poorly designed workstation, are causing kids to experience back pain similar to that which makes their parents file WCB claims. One means with which parents can help prevent back pain in their kids before it starts is by insuring that their home office is ergonomically efficient for themselves and their children. Ergonomic task chairs with height and arm adjustment features, allow parents and kids to customize their seating according to their body size and needs, while reducing stress on the shoulder, neck, and back.

Others are turning to fun and innovative back care seating products, such as the Swopper. This ergonomic bouncy stool-like chair eliminates static seating and gives you a fluid,

energized movement for a healthy back. The patented mechanism was engineered and crafted in Germany to improve your posture, strengthen the muscles in your lower back and improve circulation to your lower extremities. In addition, affordable lumbar supports and seat cushions that conform to the curves and angles of your body, can be an easy fix for poorly designed workstation furniture to reduce pressure and relieve back pain.

Finally, here are a few tips to promote proper posture and sitting, for you and your child:

- Sit back in your chair and use a good back support, do not lean forward; it increases pressure on the spine. Keep your feet flat on the floor or use a footrest.
- Keep your wrists as flat as possible with your elbows at a 90-degree or greater angle. Make sure that the upper arm and elbows are as close to the body and as relaxed as possible for mouse use - avoid overreaching
- Make sure the head is over the shoulders and the neck is as straight as possible
- Change positions frequently to avoid fatigue. Simply walking around the room every 30 to 60 minutes rests both eyes and body.
- As a general rule, children should not carry more than 15 to 20 percent of their body weight in their backpacks, according to Backpack Safety America (BSA).
- It is also important for adults and children to see a chiropractor regularly. This will help prevent joint stiffness and muscle tension in and around your and your children's spine.