AirPacks® System Designed to Help Prevent Student Backpack Injuries

Backpack injuries for young people is increasingly becoming a major problem. AirPacks® backpacks, endorsed by the Congress of Chiropractic State Associations, is part of the solution.

Osceola, Wisconsin (PRWEB) March 11, 2006 -- School nurses, emergency room physicians, chiropractors and physical therapists alike have noted that back and neck injuries have been on the rise among kids in recent years. The culprit, they’ve found, are bulky and overloaded backpacks.

As the traditional school locker fades into obscurity – due to rising security concerns – the burden of lugging around heavy textbooks and supplies is falling directly on the shoulders of the school children. Injuries are resulting.

“As childhood is a key time for spinal growth and development, many health care providers are concerned that these repetitive and preventable injuries may lead to long-term health problems later on in life,” according to Phil Mattison, president of Core Products, which has the exclusive license for marketing the AirPacks System in the Healthcare and Specialty Retail industries.

“Heavy backpacks have an obstructive impact on the posture and spinal health of children,” says Dr. Jerry DeGrado, National Backpack Safety Chairman of the Congress of Chiropractic State Associations.

The concept for the Air Packs System came from a mother’s simple observation that there are ways to shift the weight off the back and unto the hips and legs, which can better support it. Developed in cooperation with orthopedic professionals and clinically tested, the AirPacks System has been found to reduce backpack-related stress on the body by up to 80 percent and the effective load by up to 50 percent. A study by Northeastern University found that students who switched to AirPacks for six weeks experienced, on average, a 50-percent reduction in pain.

The AirPacks System is distinguished by an ergonomic design, with wide shoulder straps and a lumbar air cushion that transfers the weight of the pack’s contents to the top of the hips. This allows the weight to be carried partially by the body’s structure. The AirPacks come in three sizes – small, medium, and large – so they may be individually fit to the child.

“When properly sized to the child, the AirPacks System actually creates a fulcrum that promotes an upright standing position, improving the child’s posture along with preventing injury,” says Mattison.

With as many as 7,500 students across the country being treated for backpack related injuries each year, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, clinicians, lawmakers and school boards alike have begun to weigh in on the issue. Proposals that have been suggested include school districts issuing separate sets of heavy textbooks for in-school and at-home use, setting maximum weight standards for textbooks, and e-text or online textbook options.

Some proposed solutions, such as the use of rolling backpacks, have been found to present problems of their own, such as creating tripping hazards in the hallways of crowded schools. With school districts facing limited budgets, it is likely that the issue of students being required to carry a large number of books and supplies on a daily basis will continue for the foreseeable future, making preventive measures for protecting their developing
spines an important and ongoing concern.

Public interest in self-care products continues to rise as more and more people become aware of the cost effectiveness of prevention. “People are finding that using a system such as AirPacks, together with an understanding of how to properly load the pack is similar to the way that athletes will wrap their ankles prior to a competition,” says Mattison. “Why do athletes go through the trouble of wrapping a perfectly healthy ankle? They do it because they understand that it costs less to prevent an injury than to treat it. The same is true of protecting the back, spine and neck.”

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