

Kids are back in school and, more than likely, carrying **heavy loads in their backpacks**. Make sure your child's backpack has **wide, padded shoulder straps** and a padded back to avoid pain and restricted circulation.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org



Eye Care for a Lifetime

For strong vision to last a lifetime, it is crucial for your child to have good eye care at a young age. "Many people associate eye problems with getting older. Although seniors are at a higher risk for eye disease, these problems may have started earlier," said Hilary Beaver, M.D., assistant professor in the University of Iowa Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. "Preschoolers, senior citizens, diabetics and others with risk factors for eye problems all need regular eye care."

One way to protect your child's vision is to have routine exams. Infants and toddlers should be screened for common childhood eye problems such as strabismus (crossed eyes) and amblyopia (lazy eye) during their regular pediatric appointments. Vision testing is recommended for all children beginning at age 3.

Some warning signs that your child may have a vision problem include wandering or crossed eyes, a family history of childhood vision problems, a disinterest in reading or viewing distant objects, and squinting or turning the head in an unusual manner while watching television.

"Most children and teenagers have healthy eyes, but they still need to take care of their vision," said Dr. Beaver. "The major danger to the eyes at these ages is accidental injury." Dr. Beaver recommended that children wear protective eyewear for all activities that present a risk of eye injury. Protecting your eyes from accidents and early detection and treatment of eye problems are the best methods for protecting your family's vision throughout their lives.

Source: University of Iowa Health Care, www.uihealthcare.com