



Back to School: Are You and Your Kids Ready?

As the summer wanes and parents begin sending their children back to school, Cohen Milstein has compiled a few health and safety tips to help keep children safe this school year. Although the dangers posed by the Covid-19 pandemic have understandably been of utmost concern, it is important to remain mindful of other everyday dangers children may encounter this school year. It is our hope that the following tips will help parents and kids take on this new school year with greater safety and confidence.

- **Transportation Safety**

- **Walkers:** Be sure children follow safe walking procedures such as walking on sidewalks, looking both ways before crossing intersections, and avoiding distractions like phones or games while walking.
- **Bikers:** Make sure children ride on the correct side of the road (in the same direction as traffic), come to a complete stop at intersections before crossing, and wear bright clothing. Have children wear properly fitted helmets that have not been subjected to an accident or hard fall. Helmets are designed to take one good hit and any helmet that has already taken such a hit needs to be replaced.
- **Bus Riders:** Go over the rules when riding on a bus, teach children the proper way to enter a bus and to cross in front of a bus to enter and exit– in clear view of the driver. Instruct children to wear seatbelts on the bus when available.
- **Drop-off / Pick-up:** Make sure children are alert and aware of where they are being picked up and dropped off and by whom. Consider agreeing on a family password and advising your children never to leave school with anyone who does not know that password.
- **Teen Drivers:** Car crashes are the #1 cause of death for teens. Parents should actively practice safe driving with their teens. Phones down while driving! Research the availability of apps to prevent texting while driving that may be available for your teen's phone or through your mobile provider.

- **Backpack Safety**

- **Don't Oversize:** Provide your child with a properly fitted backpack that is no larger than your child's back. Measurement guides are available online.

backpack should be 5%-10% of the child's body weight. Avoid rolling backpacks because they are heavier and are usually not permitted to be rolled on school grounds. **Ergonomic**

- o **Styles:** Make sure kids wear their back packs with both straps tightened correctly so weight is supported by the whole back. Consider a model with a chest strap that will help secure the pack in its proper place and distribute its weight while reducing the stress placed on your child's shoulders, neck, and back.
- **Playground & Sports Safety**
 - o Some bumps and bruises are normal with outdoor play and sports, but head injuries should never be ignored. Make sure children know to report injuries, especially head injuries, which may lead to concussions.
 - o Teach your child to voice their health concerns to the responsible adult, whether it be heat related, bully related, injury related, or safety related.
 - o Send your child to school with an insulated thermos full of water so they can rehydrate throughout the day, particularly after engaging in outside activities.

Below are helpful weblinks on child safety during the school year:

- The National Safety Council, back to school safety checklist: <https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/seasonal-safety/back-to-school>
- Safe Kids Worldwide, distracted kids walking video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9YY_S2-KIE
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, keeping kids safe as they return to school: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/school-bus-safety/keeping-children-safe>

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