

## 4 Smart Tips

# BACK TO SCHOOL

It's that time! Kids are heading back to school. Here are some simple things you can do to keep your child healthy this school year.



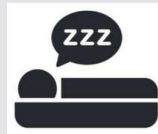
### 1 KEEP KIDS ACTIVE

After spending all day in a classroom, try to give kids some outdoor time after school. Regular exercise is linked to learning!



### 2 PACK HEALTHY LUNCHES

Aim for a "food rainbow" every day with foods of different colors and textures. A good midday meal can keep kids strong and helps them pay attention.



### 3 GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Every half hour of sleep counts! Sleep refreshes our brains and a solid bedtime routine can help keep immune systems strong.

### 4 WASH HANDS

Hand washing is the simplest way to stay healthy. Encourage your kids to wash their hands throughout the day and as soon as they get home.



**YOU ARE GOOD TO GO!**

**Have a great school year!**

# Packing Up: Prevent Backpack Injuries

Kids are carrying more than ever in their backpacks and the load is getting heavy! Backpack injuries are a real concern. Doctors treat at least 14,000 children each year with injuries related to heavy backpacks. Dr. Anisha Shetty, an Advocate Children's Medical Group pediatrician, offers this advice for keeping your child's back healthy:

- **Watch.** Encourage your child or teenager to tell you about numbness, tingling or discomfort in the arms or legs, which may indicate poor backpack fit or too much weight being carried.
- **Ease.** Watch your child put on or take off their backpack to see if it is a struggle. If the backpack seems too heavy for the child, have them remove some of the books and carry them in their arms to ease the load on their back.
- **Act.** Do not ignore any back pain in a child or teenager. Seek medical advice and care.
- **Partner.** Talk to the school about lightening the load. Team up with other parents to encourage changes.
- **Strategize.** Encourage your child to stop at his or her locker when time permits throughout the day to drop off or exchange heavier books.
- **Invest.** If your child has back pain that does not improve, consider buying a second set of textbooks to keep at home.

**Prayer:** God, our amazing bodies that you created can bear a lot and sometimes we pile on more than is good for us. Help us teach our children to care well for their bodies by being gentle with themselves.