

Do you think about your child's back and head safety while preparing for the school year?

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Credit: Johns Hopkins University

Many parents are probably thinking about their child's school attire, lunch needs and doctor visits in preparation for the upcoming school year.

But have you considered the safety of your child's helmet and whether it fits appropriately?

Whether your son or daughter is riding a bicycle, scooter or skateboard, knowing helmet safety tips can decrease the chance of life-threatening [head injuries](#).

"Properly wearing a helmet may protect your child from serious brain or head injuries," says Leticia Ryan, M.D., M.P.H., Johns Hopkins director of research in the pediatric emergency medicine division.

Ryan provides the following tips for keeping your child safe when using helmets:

1. When buying a helmet, be sure it has been certified by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.
2. It is best to take your child with you to purchase a helmet to be sure they like it and that it fits. Obtain a helmet that fits snugly, with one or two fingers able to fit between the ears and eyebrows. The ears should fit between a v finger formation and, when buckled, no more than two fingers should be able to fit between the chin and chin strap. When the child moves his or her head, there should be no helmet movement—it should fit securely.
3. Seek [medical attention](#) if your child falls while wearing a helmet and experiences headache, vomiting, difficulty waking, drowsiness or any change in behavior.
4. Replace the helmet after any fall or impact with the ground.

Should Your Child Be Screened for Scoliosis?

Scoliosis is an often painless spine curvature that may or may not require corrective surgery. Timely detection can prevent worsening of [scoliosis](#)

—the most important times to assess a child are between ages 10 and 12 for girls and 10 and 13 for boys.

"Although the predisposition to develop scoliosis is genetically determined, it usually does not show up in [early childhood](#)," says Paul Sponseller, M.D., Johns Hopkins pediatric orthopaedic surgeon.

Scoliosis is not caused or impacted by heavy backpacks. While wearing a backpack full of books and other items may cause your [child](#) temporary back discomfort, there is no need to worry about this causing scoliosis.

Sponseller highlights more facts about scoliosis:

1. Signs of scoliosis can include an uneven waist or shoulder height.
2. Moderate scoliosis can usually be controlled with a brace.
3. X-rays, if recommended, are best done with a low-dose EOS X-ray machine such as those available.

Provided by Johns Hopkins University

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