



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 3, 2008

Contact: Stephanie Marquis, (608) 266-1683

Back-To-School Safety Tips

MADISON— It's back-to-school time and state health officials remind parents to add safety steps to the list of things to do as the 2008-2009 school year starts.

“Going back to school can be an exciting and fun time, and preparing for a safe school year can help students make the most of their educational experience,” said Secretary Karen Timberlake. “One way to help prevent back pain – or even injury – is to think about how your children will be carrying their school supplies and books to and from school. It's important to limit the amount of weight your child carries in their backpack.”

Heavy backpacks can cause back pain or even injury. Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of the child's total body weight.

Parents should also carefully consider whether a child is ready to walk or bike to school without adult supervision. If children will be bicycling to school, they should:

- Always wear a bicycle helmet, no matter how short or long the ride
- Ride on the right side of the road – in the same direction as traffic
- Use appropriate hand signals
- Pay attention to traffic lights and stop signs
- Wear bright color clothing so drivers see them

For more information about school safety, visit these web sites:

General information about children's health and safety <http://www.aap.org/parents.html>

Walk to school safety tips <http://www.usa.safekids.org/walk-to-school/safetyTips.html>

Safe Routes to School <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/saferoutes-toolkit.htm>

Riding a bus to school safety tips <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/outreach/safesobr/15qp/web/sbsb.html>

Bicycling safety tips <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety/vehicle/bicycle/index.htm>

- END -