



*From DMA's Brieanne V. Midura, M.D.,  
and the American Academy of Pediatrics*

**R**eturning to school and the fall season introduce new routines for families. Here are some important tips to assist families in making the transition back to school a smooth one.

**MAKING THE FIRST DAY EASIER**

- Remind your child that she is not the only student who is a bit uneasy about the first day of school. Teachers know that students are anxious and will make an extra effort to make sure everyone feels as comfortable as possible.
- Point out the positive aspects of starting school: It will be fun. He'll see old friends and meet new ones.

**BACKPACK SAFETY**

- Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back.
- Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles.
- Consider a rolling backpack. Remember that rolling backpacks still must be carried up stairs, and they may be difficult to roll in snow.

**TRAVELING TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

**School Bus**

- Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- Sit in your seat and do not move around on the bus.
- Check to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing the street.

**Car**

- All passengers should wear a seat belt and/or an age and size appropriate car safety seat or booster seat.
- Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat (usually when the child is four years old).
- Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child is between 8 to 12 years of age).

**TO BECOME A PATIENT:**

**Y**ou can make an appointment with Dedham Medical physicians simply by calling the central number – **781-329-1400** – and asking for their offices or departments. If you don't have particular caregivers in mind, we will be happy to match you to an appropriate provider. We have two convenient locations – One Lyons St. in Dedham and 325 River Ridge Dr. in Norwood. Both have free parking.

When hospital services are needed, our physicians are on the staffs of several of the region's outstanding facilities, including Brigham/Faulkner, Newton-Wellesley and Children's Hospitals and the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Dedham Medical accepts most major health insurance plans, including Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Tufts Health Plan, Tufts Medicare Preferred, HMO Blue, Medicare and others.

DMA uses an electronic medical record (EMR), which enables your healthcare provider to have immediate access to your health information. This improves patient safety and our ability to deliver high-quality, well-coordinated care.

- All children under 13 years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles.
- Remember that many crashes occur while novice teen drivers are going to and from school. You should require seat belt use; limit the number of teen passengers; do not allow eating, drinking, cell phone conversations

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## BACK-TO-SCHOOL & FALL SAFETY TIPS – CONTINUED

or texting to prevent driver distraction; and limit nighttime driving and driving in inclement weather.

### EATING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- Most schools regularly send schedules of cafeteria menus home. With this advance information, you can plan on packing lunch on the days when the main course is one your child prefers not to eat.
- Each 12-ounce soft drink contains approximately 10 teaspoons of sugar and 150 calories. Drinking just one can of soda a day increases a child's risk of obesity by 60 percent.
- Restrict your child's soft drink consumption.

### BULLYING

*Bullying is when one child picks on another child repeatedly. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. It can happen at school, on the playground, on the school bus, in the neighborhood, or over the Internet.*

#### When Your Child Is Bullied

- Help your child learn how to respond by teaching your child how to:
  1. Look the bully in the eye.
  2. Stand tall and stay calm in a difficult situation.
  3. Walk away.
- Teach your child how to say in a firm voice:
  1. "I don't like what you are doing."
  2. "Please do NOT talk to me like that."
- Teach your child when and how to ask for help.
- Encourage your child to make friends with other children.
- Support activities that interest your child.
- Alert school officials to the problems and work with them on solutions.
- Make sure an adult who knows about the bullying can watch out for your child's safety and well-being when you cannot be there.

### DEVELOPING GOOD HOMEWORK AND STUDY HABITS

- Create an environment that is conducive to doing homework. Youngsters need a permanent work space in their bedroom or another part of the home that offers privacy.
- Set aside ample time for homework.
- Establish a household rule that the TV set stays off during homework time.
- Supervise computer and internet use.
- If your child is struggling with a particular subject, and you aren't able to help her yourself, a tutor can be a good solution. Talk it over with your child's teacher first.

*These tips are recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). For further fall safety tips go to <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/augschool.cfm>. The AAP website is an excellent resource for parents for health and safety related topics: <http://www.aap.org>.*



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*To make an appointment with any Dedham Medical provider or department, please call the central number – 781-329-1400 – and ask for the doctor's office or department.*