

SPINAL CARE

KIDS' SPINES NOT COPING

POSTURE IS HEARTBREAKING

Wendy Kay

THE increase of poor posture among school children has been described as heartbreaking by a northern beaches chiropractor.

Dr Jacey Pryjma said posture problems are presenting in children as young as five, with heavy schoolbags and long hours sitting in chairs included among the reasons.

"Our spine protects our spinal cord and the nerves, and requires movement to remain healthy," Dr Pryjma said.

"Our more sedentary, tech-dependent lifestyle means we are sitting for longer periods and our kids' spines are just not coping. The spine was not designed to move so little."

Dr Pryjma said correct posture was essential for a body to grow and develop optimally.

"A child's spine does not complete its change from cartilage to bone until the age of 21 years," she said.

"So if we ignore spinal care in children it can lead to major

problems in the future."

Symptoms from poor posture include headaches, neck pain, back pain and fatigue.

A board member for the Chiropractors Association of Australia (NSW) and practising at Body Balance Chiropractic in Mona Vale, Dr Pryjma has developed a chiropractic and education program to educate children about healthy spines.

Called Well Kids, the program offers free 15 minute posture checks for primary school children.

"Whether they have symptoms or not, children should have their postures checked every year," Dr Pryjma said. "The Well Kids program stresses the importance of exercise and good nutrition and how to keep the spine and nervous system healthy. It will empower kids with knowledge about how to get their bodies strong from the inside out."

Details: Well Kids program, Body Balance Chiropractic. Call 9999 6676 or email info@wellkids.com.au



CAUSES

- Common causes of posture problems in children:
- Too large and heavy school bags not adjusted correctly
 - Extended time sitting
 - Longer periods at the computer
 - Less outdoor activities

PREVENT PROBLEMS

- Tips to help children prevent posture problems:
- Keep school bag weight no heavier than 10 per cent of the child's body weight
 - Always wear the school bag on two shoulders
 - Have frequent breaks, once every 30 to 40 minutes when sitting for long periods
 - Get outdoors and play



Jacey Pryjma is concerned about the posture and spinal problems of children.