

BACK TO SCHOOL in 5 Easy Steps

As summer winds down, it's time to make the annual transition from pool days to school days. To help ease your kids back into the routine, follow these five easy steps.

1 Check in with your child's doctor. Are there immunizations your child will need before beginning school? Ask your doctor or visit [sutterhealth.org/yourhealth](https://www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth). Your child may also be due for a checkup, so schedule any doctor visits right away. If your child takes medicine at school, make sure you have all the doctor-signed forms that the school needs. Always inform the school about any medical conditions your child has, such as asthma or food allergies.

2 Stock up on healthy foods. Keep tasty, nutritious, easy-to-fix foods on hand for at-home breakfasts and take-along snacks and lunches. Stock up on low-fat yogurt, whole-grain cereals, low-fat cheese, dried or fresh fruit, and veggies and low-fat dip. A healthy diet—especially breakfast—may sharpen a child's attention and memory, boost energy, and improve school performance.

3 Prepare a backpack. Lighten your child's load—and prevent back and shoulder pain—by choosing a good backpack. Pick a lightweight pack with two wide, padded shoulder straps; a padded back; and a waist strap. The backpack should rest in the middle of the back. Use all the compartments to spread the weight and make sure your child carries only necessary items.

4 Re-establish bedtime schedules. A full night's sleep is vital for kids to feel and perform their best at school. Too little sleep can lead to problems with attention, memory, behavior and moods. Try to get your kids on a consistent bedtime and waking schedule. Younger school kids and preteens need between nine and 10 hours of sleep; teens need at least eight hours.

5 Set healthy ground rules. What are your expectations for getting homework done; limiting telephone, TV, computer and video game time; and balancing after-school activities and free play time? Who will pick up your kids after school—and where are they allowed to go? Talk through these rules now so that there are no gray areas, explaining that your goal is to help your kids stay safe and healthy.



Be Alert to Bullying

Bullying at school is a common problem. If your child is being picked on, here's how you can help:

- Be supportive. Remind your child that it's not his or her fault.
- Contact your child's teacher and explain the problem.
- Be alert for "cyber-bullying"—kids posting or sending nasty comments online. Tell your child not to respond—and try using software to filter out such messages.

Want to learn more about bullying? For more information, go to [sutterhealth.org/yourhealth](https://www.sutterhealth.org/yourhealth).