

Limit Screen Time!

Healthy Habits for TV, Video Games, and the Computer



Kick Out the Tube!

No doubt about it – TV, interactive video games, and computers can be excellent sources of education and entertainment for kids. But too much plugged-in time can have unhealthy side effects.

That's why it's a good idea to monitor and limit your kids' "screen-time," the time spent watching TV or DVDs, playing video games and using the computer.

Healthy Screen Time

Doctors recommend that kids get **less than 1 to 2 hours a day of screen-time** (not counting computer use related to school). And less is even better! No screen time for kids under 2 years of age.

Did You Know?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics says that kids are spending too much time sitting behind a screen.
- The average American youth spends more time in front of a TV, computer, and/or game screen than any other activity except sleeping – about 45 hours per week – that's an average of 6.4 hours of screen time per day!
- On average, kids will spend more time in front of the TV than in school this year (1,023 hrs vs 900 hrs).
- 40% of Americans frequently or always watch TV during dinner.

Source: www.tvturnoff.org

Why Tune Out?

Excessive TV and screen time cuts into family time, harms our kids' ability to read and succeed in school, promotes violence, and contributes to unhealthy lifestyles and obesity.

The average kid spends about 20 hours each week watching TV – that's 2.5 to 3 hours of TV every day (and that doesn't include video and computer time).

Watching more than 1 to 2 hours of TV per day has been consistently associated with a decreased interest in school activities and **lower academic achievement**.

The more kids watch TV and sit in front of a screen, the more likely they are to:

- Overeat
- Snack mindlessly and excessively while in front of the screen
- Eat the junk foods they see advertised on TV
- Snack between meals and eat less healthy meals
- Be less physically active - almost any other activity uses more energy than watching TV!
- Gain excessive weight
 - About 30% of school age kids are overweight
 - 60% of overweight incidence can be linked to excessive TV watching

Have your school participate in TV-Turnoff Week!

What is TV-Turnoff Week?

A national initiative from TV-Turnoff Network (www.tvturnoff.org) that encourages kids, adults, families, and schools to turn off the tube and turn on life!

When?

2008: April 21 – 27 | 2009: April 20 – 26 | 2010: April 19 – 25

How?

Contact CanDo to find out how your school can participate in TV-Turnoff Week.

10 Tips for Tuning Out!

1. Put the family on a TV diet. As a family, make at least 1 night per week a screen-free night. Make a pact to do something active rather than sit in front of the screen. Take a walk, play games, toss a frisbee!
2. Kick the TV out! Remove the TV from kids' bedrooms.
3. Turn off the TV during meals.
4. Hide the remote! Avoid channel surfing!
5. Don't allow kids to watch TV while doing homework.
6. Avoid using the TV, computers, or video games as a reward or punishment.
7. Treat TV, videos, and computer time as a privilege that kids need to earn – not a right to which he or she is entitled. Tell kids that TV is allowed only after chores and homework are completed.
8. Avoid using the TV, computers or video games as a babysitter.
9. Move the TV to a less prominent location – don't make TV a focal point of the room.
10. Practice what you preach – kids won't accept being restricted to 1 to 2 hours of TV if you park in front of the TV for 4 hours. The best way to influence your kids' behavior is by example.



Turn Off TV... Turn On a Healthier Lifestyle!

- Walk the dog, walk your neighbor's dog, give your dog a bath
- Hit your local biking and walking trails – bike, walk, hike, rollerblade
- Plant your own vegetable garden
- Invite Mom and Dad outside for a walk
- Have a hula hoop contest, see who can jump rope the longest
- Have friends over for a scavenger hunt
- Put on your favorite CD and dance!
- Take a dance class
- Fly a kite, juggle, play Twister, have a tug-of-war contest, build a fort
- Walk to a place where you can watch the sunset
- Check out your local recreation center
- Have friends over and make up a skit
- Shoot some hoops, play on the swings
- Learn a new sport, climb a tree
- Jump on a trampoline, have a water balloon fight
- Go canoeing, climbing, sailing, snow shoeing
- Play kickball, foosball, frisbee, hide-and-seek
- Wash the car, make a home video
- Teach somebody something new, teach your pet a new trick
- Read a joke book, a regular book, a magazine, the newspaper
- Volunteer at the Humane Society, serve a meal at the Mission
- Rake the yard for your neighbor

“The easiest way to reduce inactivity is to turn off the TV set. Almost anything uses more energy than watching TV.”

Dr. William Dietz,
Centers for Disease Control

Resources:

- *TV-Turnoff Network:* www.tvturnoff.org
- *Kids Health:* www.kidshealth.org
- *Do More, Watch Less: A TV/screen reduction tool for use with kids. Also available in Spanish.* www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/copi/copiforms/tvtool.htm
- *Media-Smart Youth:* www.nichd.nih.gov/msy

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