

Watching TV, surfing the web and playing computer games or small handheld devices can be good fun – and even educational! But spending too much time sitting still each day can be bad for your health. It's important to balance screen time with active play time so your body can grow strong, fit and healthy.

Effects of too much screen time

- Your posture can get worse.
- Your eyesight can deteriorate.
- You can strain your wrist, thumb and elbow.
- You can have problems with your sleep.
- Your social skills can suffer.
- Your body can store more energy than it uses.

How long is too long?

It is recommended that you spend no more than two hours each day on the computer, small screen games or watching TV. Long periods of use should be broken up as often as possible.

The facts on TV

- Children who watch TV for more than two hours every day are more likely to have an unhealthy diet, less likely to eat fruit and less likely to take part in sport or physical activity.
- 92% of students aged 12-17 years watched television, used the internet, or played computer games for more than two hours a day.
- Nearly half of children aged between 5 and 15 years spend more than 2 hours every day on 'small screen' entertainment.
- Kids and teens who watch TV are more likely to snack on foods that are high in sugar, salt or saturated fat.

What about Wii?

A study in the British Medical Journal found that playing active computer games uses a lot more energy than playing sedentary computer games – but not as much energy as playing the sport itself.

“The energy used when playing active Wii™ Sports games was not of high enough intensity to contribute toward the recommended daily amount of exercise in children.”

Tips

- Work out a TV viewing schedule with your Mom, Dad or caregiver that strikes the right balance between screen time and active time each day.
- Try not to spend too much time on the computer during the daytime – you could be having fun playing outside!
- If your favourite TV shows are on during the day, set the recorder and watch them later.
- Write a list of active things you can do instead of playing on the computer. If you get bored, pick something on your list to do.

<https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/kids-teens/switch-off-the-screen.aspx>