

Walk
NEBRASKA**More Screen Time Equals Less Activity Time**

How much time do you spend in front of a screen each day? On average, 8 to 18-year-olds spend nearly six hours on the computer, watching TV or videos or playing video games.

Health experts warn that too much screen time throws off a person's energy balance, making it hard to maintain a healthy weight. Energy balance is the balance between the amount of calories you burn through physical activity (energy out) and the calories you eat (energy in). Too much energy in without enough energy out results in weight gain.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children get at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week. Cutting back on recreational screen time makes it easier to meet this goal. Here are a few tips to reduce children's time in front of the screen:

- **Make a family agreement to limit recreational screen time to less than two hours a day.** More importantly, enforce the rule once it's made.
- **Make meal time, family time.** Turn off the TV during family meal time. Family meal times improve both communication and relationships among family members. Research has shown that families who eat together tend to eat more nutritious meals than families who eat separately. Make eating together a priority and schedule family meals at least two to three times a week.
- **Offer fun alternatives to television watching.** Watching TV can become a habit for you and your child. Provide other alternatives for them to spend their time, such as playing outside, reading, learning a hobby or sport, or spending time with family and friends.
- **Take the TV out of your child's bedroom.** More than two-thirds of young children have a TV in their bedroom. This tends to isolate family members and decrease interaction. Also, children who have TVs in their room tend to spend almost 1 1/2 hours more in a typical day watching television than their peers without TV in their room.
- **Set a good example.** Be a good role model by limiting your screen time to no more than two hours per day. If your kids see you following your own rules, they will be more likely to follow. Instead of watching TV or surfing the Internet, spend time with your family doing something fun and active.

For tips on getting active visit: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/get-active/getting-active.htm>
Start tracking how much time your family spends in front of a screen with the Children's Screen Time Log:
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/screen-time-log.pdf>

Sources:

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/reduce-screen-time/tips-to-reduce-screen-time.htm>

Know how. Know now.

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