



How does media addiction affect children?

Problematic, excessive and compulsive use of the internet and online games may lead to poor school performance, relationship problems with friends and family, trouble sleeping, and may lead to serious injury. This tip sheet can help you monitor and guide your teens' media choices in order to optimize their health and development.

How can media use lead to media addiction?

- * The ability to stay virtually connected almost anytime anywhere can lead some teens to check their devices and social media accounts compulsively out of fear that if they don't they may lose their sense of social connectedness. This can lead to problematic and dangerous behavior such as texting while driving, which can result in injury, and answering late night social media messages, which can disrupt sleep.
- ★ Many social media platforms and online games are designed so that users can share, create, and/or engage with constant streams of content meant to keep users continually active and engaged. The pressure to keep connected and gain attention and approval from their friends may lead to problematic or excessive use.
- ◆ Teens are often very aware of their parents' media habits. If you are spending excessive amounts of time using media such as the internet or video games, your teen may believe that this behavior is acceptable and even begin to overuse media herself.



What can I do?

- * Encourage your teen to balance their social time by engaging with friends directly through organized sports or other activities as well as through media. Prioritize in person communication by keeping family meal times media free. Set up a device charging station so that all devices are charged in a common area overnight to help monitor use.
- ★ Look out for possible signs of problematic behaviors, such as if your teen's gaming or social media use disrupts other important activities such as completing homework or getting enough sleep. Help your teen manage her time so that she has a balanced diet of activities, and set time parameters around gaming and social media to help avoid compulsive use.
- ◆ Be mindful of how you are using media when your teen is present. Model healthy and responsible media habits such as putting your phone away during family meals and turning off the TV or video game after your show is over or the designated amount of time has ended.

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