



How does media addiction affect children?

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

How can media use lead to media addiction?

* Mobile devices offer many children the ability to game and connect with others socially virtually anytime and anywhere. If left unregulated, this can become problematic when youth prioritize this connectivity above other important activities such as sleep, school, and in-person social activities.

★ Many online and video games for children are designed to be engaging and encourage users to continue playing. When these games are played socially, the attention and approval from their friends may also lead to problematic or excessive use.

◆ Your children learn from watching you. If you are spending excessive amounts of time using media such as the internet or video games, your kids may believe that this behavior is acceptable and even begin to overuse media themselves.



What can I do?

* Help your children manage the time they spend with media, so that they learn to use media purposefully and only when appropriate. For example, it's common for kids this age to play online games with friends, but it can be detrimental to their health for them to text late into the night. 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, for example, if your child's gaming disrupt other important activities such as completing homework or getting enough sleep. Set time limits for your children and remind them as the end time approaches ("5 more minutes") so that they are able to wrap up their game play.

◆ Be mindful of how you are using media when your children are 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.

Where can I find more information?
Visit <http://cmch.tv>



Boston Children's Hospital
Until every child is well™