

Health Promotion in Motion

Turn Off TV Turn on a Healthier Lifestyle!

This month many schools and communities promote **TV Turn Off Week**, which is often the same week as April school vacation. While the focus of the week is on reducing TV time for kids, watching less TV can improve health at any age.



For Adults

The average adult watches 4 hours of TV per day. That equals:

- 28 hours per week of TV time
- One day per week of TV time
- Two months of TV time per year
- If you live to age 63, that's **9 years** watching TV

When adults watch TV, they lose time that they could be physically active, cooking healthier meals, doing yard work, and spending quality time with friends and family.

TV watching and other screen time (computer, video games, DVD watching) is linked to overweight and obesity in adults. TV viewing burns fewer calories than other activity done while awake and often adults snack in front of the TV adding unneeded extra calories.

First Observe, Then Change

If you don't think you watch too much TV, keep a TV diary for a week. Leave it by the TV and write down how many minutes of TV you watch each time you turn off the TV. The next week, notice what programs you watch and how much time you spend clicking through channels looking for something to watch. Make a note of the shows you really enjoy watching. The following week, try to just watch the shows that you enjoyed.



While watching TV, try to keep your hands busy so that you are less likely to snack. Easy things to do while watching TV include:

- Ironing
- Fold laundry
- Crafts
- March in place (great to do during commercials)
- Stretch
- Chair squats (stand up from the couch, sit down, repeat)
- Arm curls

An easy way to watch less TV is to turn off the TV at dinnertime. See more tips on page 2.

Children's Health and TV Watching

Reducing TV time is a good idea because children:

- Get no activity while watching TV
- View a lot of commercials for unhealthy foods (and then nag their parents to buy them)
- Snack while watching TV



On average, most children watch about 3 hours of TV per day.

This is time when they could be active, reading, doing homework, or helping with household chores.

Because TV watching puts children and teens at risk for overweight, physical inactivity, lower fitness, and increased cigarette smoking, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- No TV for children under age 2
- No more than 2 hours per day for children age 2 and up

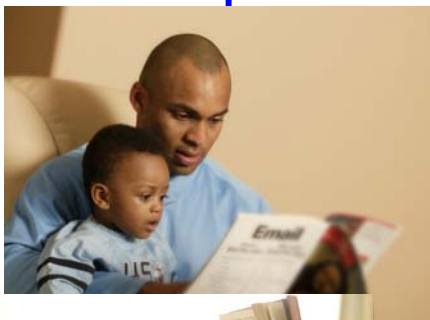
TV watching is also linked to other risky health behaviors in children:

- Eating a high calorie, high fat, and low-fiber diet
- Drinking too many soft drinks and other sugar sweetened beverages
- Risk of adult overweight and obesity

Taking Control

Many parents don't want to limit their children's TV time because they would have to set a good example and limit their own TV time. Since adults watch more TV than children it can be challenging for parents to make a change that works for the whole family.

One way to help manage how much TV children watch is to use parental controls through the TV, cable, or satellite TV provider. For more information go to: www.theTVboss.org.



Need to Unwind?

Many people watch TV to unwind from a busy day. How about something new? You will improve your health while setting a good example for your family.

- Read a book or magazine; solve a puzzle
- Look through a picture album
- Take a stretch or yoga break
- Take a walk; sit in a garden; watch a bird
- Meditate; have a cup of tea
- Go for a bike ride
- Talk with a friend or family member
- Pamper yourself with a bubble bath
- Treat yourself to a movie, hair cut, or manicure
- Work on a favorite craft project
- Listen to music, dance around your house