

Turn off the TV or computer and get active

Did you know?

- ★ Spending too much sedentary or 'still' time watching TV, surfing online or playing computer or electronic hand-held games is linked to children becoming overweight or obese.
- ★ Children who watch TV for more than 2 hours every day are more likely to have an unhealthy diet, less likely to eat fruit and less likely to be physically active.
- ★ Nearly half of children aged between 5 and 15 years spend more than 2 hours every day on 'small screen' entertainment.
- ★ Children are more likely to snack on foods that are high in sugar, salt or saturated fat when they're watching TV.

How much time in front of the screen?

When kids and teens spend time in front of small screens – whether it's the TV, computer or hand-held games – it takes away from the time they could spend playing sport, games or being active.

Australian guidelines recommend that kids and teens should minimise the time they spend being sedentary (still) every day.*

Kids and teens should spend no more than 2 hours each day using small screen entertainment. Long periods of use should be broken up as often as possible.

While computers and TV can be valuable for education and learning, the health benefits, skills and enjoyment that kids and teens get from being physically active are just as important.

“Set limits for computer games and being online”



Tips for parents

- Before you switch on the TV or the computer for your children, stop and think – could they spend the time being active and have some 'small screen' time later on?
- Set limits on TV viewing. If there is a specific program that your child wants to watch, turn the TV off once it has finished. Alternatively, record the program and watch it together later on.
- Set limits for computer games and being online – no more than 2 hours a day and not during daylight hours when they could be outside and active.
- Don't allow a TV or computer in your child's bedroom. Keep them in a common area of the family home so you can monitor use.
- Have a list of active indoor and outdoor games or activities for your children, so you can suggest alternatives to watching TV or playing on the computer.

For more information and ideas on healthy eating and physical activity, go to www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

*The recommendations are based on Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for children (5-12 years) and young people (13-17 years).