

# staying HEALTHY



## Screens, screens, everywhere a screen

Too much of a good thing can be bad. Too much of a bad thing can make matters worse. Consider “screen time” for children.

Numerous studies suggest that children who spend too much time watching TV, playing video games, and using mobile devices can suffer a host of physical, psychological, and social problems.

Many of today’s statistics come from surveying children and parents about their screen time habits. But what about the scientific evidence related to screen time and its effects on children?

Here is a sampling of what researchers say:

- The US Department of Education states that kindergarteners who watch television for more than one hour a day are 52 percent more likely to be overweight (72 percent more likely to be obese) than children who watch less. The study involved 12,650 children from around the United States.
- According to the Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, a child will consume an additional 167 calories for each hour of TV watched.

- The American Journal of Family Therapy states that four hours per day of screen time means that kids will need 20 minutes longer to fall asleep than kids who do not spend that much time on the screen.
- A study at JFK Medical Center found that teenagers send an average of 34 texts a night from bed, adding to the sleep deprivation that is so common and harmful to them.
- Several studies show that the blue light from mobile screens has a similar effect to caffeine, affecting sleep and promoting agitation among children.
- Teenagers who spend a lot of time playing violent video games or watching violent shows on television are more aggressive and more likely to fight with their peers and argue with their teachers, according to a study in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence.
- Numerous studies also suggest that children can develop pain in their fingers and wrists, narrowed blood vessels in their eyes, and neck and back pain from being slumped over while using their phones, tablets, and computers.

*Continued on back*

## Danielle Ireland, FNP-C

Danielle is a board certified family nurse practitioner (FNP-C). She is the primary provider at the Chrisman Clinic, a position she has held since May 2014.



Prior to Horizon Health, Danielle worked as a registered nurse in Urbana since 2008. She was also a preceptor and resource nurse.

Danielle earned her master’s of science degree in nursing through Frontier Nursing University in Kentucky. Her training included an emphasis in rural health. She has a bachelor’s of science degree in nursing from Lakeview College of Nursing in Danville, and a bachelor’s degree in animal science from the University of Illinois.

Danielle lives in Allerton with her husband, Monte, and daughter, Hannah.

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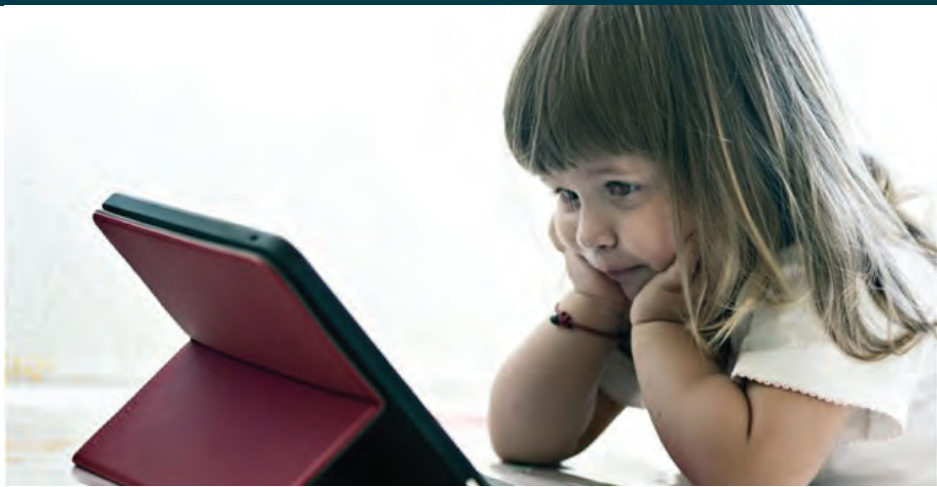
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## Screen time: Give your eyes a break

Is too much screen time harming children's vision?

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), ophthalmologists—physicians who specialize in medical and surgical eye care—are seeing an increase in children with dry eye and eye strain from too much screen time.

However, this does not mean that children necessarily need a prescription for special computer glasses, nor have they developed the need for reading glasses, the AAO states.

It does mean that children need to take more frequent breaks from their screens. This is because they do not blink as often while using computers and other digital devices. Ophthalmologists recommend taking a 20-second break from close-up work every 20 minutes.

The AAO offers the following tips to help protect children's eyes from computer eyestrain:

- Set a timer as a reminder to take a break.

- Alternate reading an e-book with a real book and encourage kids to look up and out the window every two chapters.
- After completing a level in a video game, look out the window for 20 seconds.
- Pre-mark books with a paper clip every few chapters to remind your child to look up. On an e-book, use the "bookmark" function for the same effect.
- Avoid using a computer outside or in brightly lit areas, as the glare on the screen can create strain.
- Adjust the brightness and contrast of the computer screen so that it feels comfortable to the child.
- Tell children to use good posture when using a computer and when reading.
- Encourage children to hold digital media farther away; 18 to 24 inches is ideal.
- Create a distraction that causes the child to look up every now and then.
- Remind children to blink when watching a screen.

## Screens *(Continued from front)*

### Solving the problem

To combat the adverse effects of screen time, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests the following:

- Children aged 2 and younger should not be exposed to any electronic media: "A child's brain develops rapidly during these first years, and young children learn best by interacting with people, not screens."
- Young children and teens should spend no more than one

or two hours a day with entertainment media, preferably with high-quality content, and spend more free time playing outdoors, reading, doing hobbies and "using their imaginations in free play."

- Parents should not allow TVs and computers in bedrooms. They also should restrict computer time during homework, and TV time during meals.

The American Academy of Pediatrics also suggests parents use limited screen time as a reward for being active or reading a book, set a smartphone curfew, and decrease their own screen time to set an example.

## SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER Community Health Programs

### BEE WELL FUN RUNS

#### September 6–October 11

- » The Edgar County Bee Well group is sponsoring a six-week series of free fun runs for children of all ages and abilities. All races take place on Thursday at 5:30 pm at West Lake Park in Paris. Registration not required.

### MONTHLY HEALTH SCREENINGS

#### September 14, October 19

- » Blood sugar, blood pressure, and lipid panel (HDL, LDL, and triglycerides) screenings, 7 to 9 am. Fasting for eight hours in advance is required. Cost is \$25. Call 217-466-4228.

### MOVIE NIGHT

#### September 22

- » Join Horizon Health for this free community appreciation event sponsored at dusk at Twin Lakes Park. Free popcorn and drinks will be available. The name of the movie will follow.

### FREE ADULT CPR/AED CLASS

#### October 1

- » The non-healthcare provider course teaches basic CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED); 8 am to 1 pm in Conference Room D. Call 217-466-4320. When calling, leave your name and you will be registered.

### VOLUNTEERS CHOCOLATE SALE

#### October 24 & 25

- » The PCH Volunteers will hold their South Bend Chocolate Company sale from 8 am to 4 pm by the rotunda entrance to the Paris Clinic.