

Fact Sheet for **Kids** GROWING UP HEALTHY



5 or more fruits and vegetables • 2 hours or less of screen time • 1 hour of physical activity • Almost no sugary beverages

Did you know that...



The average American teen spends more time watching TV than any other activity except for sleeping—even more time, in fact, than going to school?

Each year, most teens see more than 40,000 commercials on television? Sodas (pH 2.5) are almost as acidic as car-battery acid (pH 1)?

Try not to spend more than two hours per day in front of a screen!

What’s “screen time?” It’s time you spend watching TV, DVDs or videos, using the computer, or playing video games. You’ll be happy to hear that “screen time” DOES NOT include time you spend on the computer doing homework. Whew!

So, not including homework, how much time do you spend in front of the screen every day? If you’re like most kids, it’s probably far more than the recommended 2 hours. Today, kids across the U.S. are racking up almost 6 hours a day in screen time! That’s about 42 hours per week—more than a full time job!

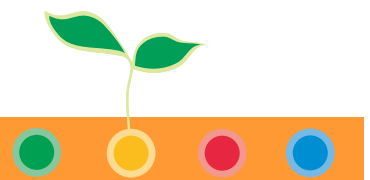
Unless you are working out with an exercise video or playing Dance, Dance, Revolution, how often are you moving while you are in front of a screen? Go outside and do something fun like catching a football, sinking a free throw, or turning a jump rope. The more TV you watch, the less time you have to be active and healthy.

Why do we always eat in front of the TV?

How often do you grab a snack and eat it while watching TV? Snacking isn’t bad if you only eat when you’re hungry, but are you always hungry when you eat? Researchers have found that the more you watch TV, the more you eat—especially the types of foods advertised on television, which usually aren’t too healthy!

Can watching TV affect your grades?

Yes! Students who watch less than one hour of screen time a day have better reading skills than students who watch more than one hour a day. Here’s a challenge: bury your TV by reading and getting active! For each hour that you read or do physical activity (walking, basketball, skateboarding, etc.), take a small piece of paper, write down your book or activity, and tape it over your TV screen. Keep reading, being active, and adding paper until your TV is “buried” in books and activities!



Think you're just watching a show? Oh no—think again!

Every time you turn on the TV, you see commercials, right? Companies pay big money to get their ads on TV—just so YOU will see them. In 1999, advertisers spent more than \$13 billion (WOW!) on advertising and marketing their products to you and your friends. They figure that if you see their products, you're more likely to either buy them yourself or ask your parents to buy them.

All of those things you've bought recently, from candy to chips to Big Macs to sneakers...where did you get the idea that you had to have them? Hmm...bet you've seen commercials or billboards or magazine ads for at least some of those things! Yikes! Maybe those advertisers gotcha!

Now advertisers are even promoting their products in the programs themselves, not just in commercials. Look at what your favorite character is drinking or eating. Do you recognize the brand? Food companies spend a lot of money to get those products in the hands of that TV character. They want you to think it's cool and buy it—or grab it from your kitchen to eat while you're watching the show. Pretty sneaky, huh? Beat the sneak! Pay attention to advertisements on TV and think about what they're trying to get you to do!

Tips for tuning out—what to do instead of watching TV

- Read a really good book, comic book, or magazine that's not for school.
- Play board games, card games, or invent your own game (and your own rules!).
- Make up wild, scary, or funny stories.
- Help out around the house.
- Act out your own TV show, play, or story.
- Call or visit your grandparents.
- Do some arts and crafts—paint, draw, sculpt, or make bead jewelry.
- Listen to music and have a dance party!
- Volunteer to help out in your community.
- Hang out with your friends and play sports, walk in the park, or go to the pool or skating rink.
- Hang out with parents... who knows? They may have something interesting to say today.
- Join a sports program in your neighborhood.
- Ride a bike, scooter, skateboard... anything without a motor.
- Turn off the TV during dinner and ask each person in your family to share the high and low points of the day.