



Choosing Foods for Me

Fourth-grade nutrition education newsletter

Lesson 9

Too much screen time!

Too much screen time (TV, video games, computers) contributes to increasing youth obesity. Youth spend too much time being inactive and not enough time being active. Screen time should be monitored and limited so it doesn't take the place of family time, unplugged downtime, outdoor play and other physical activity. Children benefit mentally, socially and physically when screen time is limited.



What can you do to combat too much screen time?

- Get on your feet! Use television commercial breaks as an opportunity to walk in place, do jumping jacks or other physical activities with your child or other family members. If there are no commercials, hit pause and get up and move for at least 5 minutes after each show or video.
- Get together as a family to write a list of things to do other than watch TV or other screen time activities. Post these ideas on the refrigerator.
- During family meals, turn off the TV, put away cell phones and talk about everyone's day.
- Keep the TV off when no one is watching it. Need some background noise? Put on some music.
- Create an activity box and put it by the door. The activity box can include jump ropes, balls and everyone's athletic shoes. This reminds everyone to be active. Make active time family time. Get together to walk to the park, bike or visit your local farmers market.



Try a new activity. Throw lightweight scarves in the air. Keep them in the air as you turn around in a circle and do other moves.

Looking for new ways to be active?

- Play flashlight tag in the dark.
- Plant a garden and get active maintaining it.
- Dance to music. Make up new dance moves.
- Play indoor balloon volleyball as a family. Try to keep the balloon in the air.
- Throw lightweight scarves in the air. Keep them in the air as you turn around in a circle and do other moves.

Now comes the hard part ...

These tips can help decrease your child's screen time. They are a challenge but not impossible!

- Set time limits: no more than two hours of screen time a day.
- Keep TV sets, phones, tablets and laptops out of children's bedrooms. It's easier to monitor use when they are out in the open.

Remember to make active time family time. If your children see you being active, they are more likely to be active, too.



Plant a garden, and get active maintaining it.

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For more information, call MU Extension's Show Me Nutrition Line at 1-888-515-0016.

Need help stretching your food dollars? Contact your local resource center or go online to mydss.mo.gov/food-assistance