

TEEN TALK



Winter 2018 | CYWH/YMH

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL LEAGUE'S RESOURCE CENTER

The Value of Reducing Screen Time *— By Dulce*

Have you considered the amount of time you spend on your phone or in front of a screen? Many people like me have become concerned with the amount of time we spend using devices such as: computers, tablets, and cell phones and it is also a subject of debate among authorities in the field. It's easy to become consumed with our devices because technology has made it so easy to find information, chat online with friends, and research anything we might want to know about. Personally, it often feels like I'm missing out on something if I'm not using my phone. However, excessive screen usage can greatly limit face-to-face social interactions or the likelihood of participating in real-time activities.

The first step to cutting down on screen time is identifying how much time you actually use your phone, laptop or other devices. For example, there are certain apps such as Offtime, BreakFree, etc. that allow you to track the amount of time you spend on your cell phone and help you reduce it by setting limits. You can also turn off the notifications to the social media apps you use, so you won't be tempted to pick up your phone. Usually notifications are red; a trigger color that instantly draws our attention so by turning the notifications off, you will not be distracted. You may also consider deleting social media apps during the week so you are more apt to get school work done without being distracted by posts. Another strategy you might try is keeping your phone out of arms reach at night such as charging it in another room, so you won't be tempted to check it. Completely prohibiting yourself from using your cell phone or other devices is unrealistic; therefore, you might decide to slowly decrease the amount of time you spend in front of a screen. This will give you free time to meet up with friends in person, try a new hobby, or simply relax. You will be able to reclaim the time that you would have spent in front of a screen or on your phone and direct it towards activities and friendships you truly care about. In an effort to reduce your own usage, you might want to consider asking your family to participate as well! Adults use their cellphones just as much as teenagers do and will also see the benefits of cutting back on screen time. Make a "no phone" rule at the dinner table, it'll help start conversations. You should also aim to keep your phone away from your bedroom as studies show that having a phone in the bedroom can reduce your quality of sleep and your well-being. Eventually, you will not feel the urge to constantly check your phone for updates. Instead, you will be satisfied knowing that you have successfully taken control of your screen time.



Boston Children's Hospital
Center for Young Women's Health

IN THIS ISSUE:
THE VALUE OF REDUCING SCREEN TIME
HOW TO AVOID THE DREADED CONVERSATION
FINDING A BALANCE: HEALTHY EATING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

How To Avoid the Dreaded Conversation — By Judy



The holidays are typically a time when families and friends get together. If you're a high school senior, it's just a matter of time before your relatives bombard you with questions about what colleges you're applying to and if you've declared a major yet. Family gatherings can be fun but they can also be awkward and stressful, particularly if the topic of the conversation makes you feel uncomfortable. Although talking about college as a senior is very relevant, sometimes you just want a break from it all. For example, if it's the fifth time your grandma asks, "What colleges are you applying to?" or your cousins are pressuring you to apply to their alma mater, you might want to politely ease out of the conversation. Here are some tips:

- Focus on the other person: "How's your new job?" or "How's work been?"
- Change the conversation by mentioning something in your surroundings such as: "What do you think of our new decorations?"
- Introduce a new topic of conversation such as how your favorite sports team is doing.
- If your relative(s) continues to turn the discussion back to the dreaded college conversation, it's okay to be direct and say, "Thanks for your interest but I'd rather we talk about something else. I just want to relax and keep my mind off college applications right now."

Finding a Balance: Healthy Eating during the Holidays

— By Judy

With the festive season upon us, families are beginning to plan their holiday meals. Whether it's the pies, mashed potatoes or the green bean casserole that make your mouth water, it's easy to overindulge during holidays. Here are some tips to help you make healthy food choices.

- Consider preparing a healthy side dish to bring to the holiday table.
- Don't fast until dinner time or you will likely overeat. If you eat a healthy breakfast you're less likely to eat past the point of fullness at dinner time.
- Think "MyPlate." Fill half of your plate with fruits and veggies. Limit starches and grains to $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate and choose a protein such as turkey for the other $\frac{1}{4}$.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Consider flavored seltzer water or adding fruit and herbs to a pitcher of still water for the table.
- Balance nutrient dense foods such as fruits and vegetables with smaller portions of treat foods like cookies and desserts.
- Eat when you are hungry and stop when you feel full. Remember, you can always eat leftovers the next day.
- Get out and move around! The holiday season would not be the same without taking part in winter sports such as skating, skiing, building snowmen, taking brisk walks, or other physical activities.
- Don't forget to relax! The holidays are for enjoying time with family and friends!

