



## Is Screen Time Affecting What Your Child Eats?

### 10 Activities That Don't Include a Screen

1. Play a board game
2. Go outside and play a game of tag
3. Ride a bicycle
4. Work on a puzzle
5. Enjoy a coloring book
6. Paint or draw
7. Build with Legos
8. Play a card game
9. Fold a paper plane or origami
10. Play an outdoor sport such as soccer, basketball or throw a frisbee



What a child likes and dislikes to eat plays a huge role in the child's overall diet. Food likes and dislikes develop early on in a child's life and remain fairly stable during childhood. It is important to mold the environment that shapes a child's food choices in order to promote healthy likes and dislikes. Screen time—time spent using a computer, watching television, or playing video games—is part of the environment that shapes what a child eats. While screen time can be a positive, teaching tool, it can also have a negative impact on a child's health.

#### How can too much screen time hurt?

##### 1. TV teaches about “junk foods”

Children learn about the world by watching. The foods they see advertised on TV are usually high in solid fats, added sugars, and calories that lack other key nutrients like vitamins and minerals. What children are taught on TV is that these foods are fun to eat, taste good, and make you look really cool.

##### 2. Mindless eating = eating more

Children are distracted from eating when they are watching a screen. While distracted, they can't listen to their body telling them when they are full or when they are hungry. This can lead to children eating too much or not eating enough. Eating in front of a screen doesn't allow children to listen to those natural cues that help create a healthy relationship with food.

##### 3. Less time spent in exercise

Time spent in front of a screen is also time spent not moving. This is known as sedentary time. Your body uses up fewer calories during sedentary times and more calories during time spent moving. While watching a screen, a child spends more time sedentary and uses up fewer calories. All these factors can increase the chance of gaining weight.

Limiting screen time can reduce the risk of your child mindlessly eating food that doesn't nourish the body. Turning off the screen can also give you time to come together and connect as a family.

