

Script – Broadcast– Too much screen time, too little sleep put kids’ health at risk

INTRO

It’s no secret that some kids and teenagers get too much screen time in any given day. And that could mean health issues down the road. According to a [study](#) published in the Journal of American Heart Association, kids and teens who spend time on screens and get less sleep have a greater risk for future heart and metabolic issues like high blood sugar, high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

The study came from data collected from more than 1,000 kids and teenagers from Denmark. Teenagers with excess screen time were especially at risk. Screen time included either watching TV or using electronic devices for videogaming or socialization. When kids are up late at night, obviously it can impact sleep, which regulates hormones, metabolism and blood pressure.

[Natasha Noel, MD](#), a pediatric cardiologist with OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute, says studies like this are invaluable.

(((SOT)))

Natasha Noel, MD, pediatric cardiologist, OSF HealthCare

“I liked the fact that they highlighted that everyday habits could have an effect on the cardiac health of kids and teens. I also liked that they didn't focus on weight alone, but they looked at other metabolic measures like high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose.” (:19)

VO

Dr. Noel adds that more information is probably needed. Since the study reviewed a Danish population, Dr. Noel says the medical community would benefit from a larger and more diverse group of children for future studies. Another study could analyze what types of screens are used, the purposes for which they are used, and the long-term effects on the kids.

The study indirectly illustrates the importance of kids and the need for physical activity. If they’re crashed in front of the TV watching movies or playing video games, it could be an indication they are not getting enough physical movement needed for cardiovascular health.

(((SOT)))

Natasha Noel, MD, pediatric cardiologist, OSF HealthCare

“Physical activity is one of the mainstays of treatment, especially when we do lifestyle management for high blood pressure and high cholesterol. But even with physical activity, that screen time and less sleep may be independent risk factors for cardiovascular health long term for kids.” (:22)

TAG

It’s a conversation Dr. Noel has with many of her patients and their parents. She stresses that she’s not against screen time. But it’s important to set some ground rules – limit the use of screens, no screens in the bedroom when it’s time for bed and keep a consistent bedtime. It’s about balance and limitations. Habits developed today could affect their long-term cardiac health.