

[IMAGE]

Death by TV?

By Editorial Staff

Spend hour after hour in front of the boob tube watching crime-scene dramas? Turns out no matter what type of programming you watch, if you watch too much, the crime scene may turn out to be your own living room. That's because too much television viewing increases your risk of death from conditions such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, liver disease and even flu or pneumonia.

Researchers tracked more than 200,000 elderly adults (ages 50-71; all of whom were free of chronic disease) for 15 years, determining cause of death if it occurred during that time frame and correlating it with average hours of TV watched per day. Compared to adults who watched less than one hour daily, the death rate during the study period was 15 percent higher among adults who watched 3-4 hours a day and a whopping 47 percent higher in adults who watched seven or more hours a day.

This doesn't mean watching TV causes disease or death, but if you consider some of the other consequences of prolonged time on the couch – notably a greater tendency to snack on unhealthy foods and overwhelming lack of movement – you can see why the connection exists. That said, researchers noted that the link between TV viewing and death held whether adults were active or inactive, suggesting exercise alone cannot compensate for excess television time.

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