

[IMAGE]

Wide Awake in the Electronic Age: Our Kids' Sleep Habits Are Suffering

By Editorial Staff

Smartphones, tablets and everything in between – chances are high that if your child's over the age of 6 (and in some cases, even younger these days), they're spending a considerable (read: unhealthy) amount of time engaged with portable electronic devices. At the same time, we're finding that kids are suffering from sleep deprivation in terms of time spent asleep and quality of sleep enjoyed. Is there a connection? Yes, say researchers who reviewed various studies on the topic – and the news is even worse than you might imagine.

After reviewing 20 studies, researchers found that kids who used portable electronic devices near bedtime had more difficulty falling or staying asleep, and experienced poor daytime function because of sleepiness. Device use also contributed to lack of sleep compared to non-use: less than 10 hours per night for children and less than nine hours for teens.

kids on computer - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark But here's the kicker: Even kids who didn't use the devices, but had access to them, still experienced shorter sleep times. Children with bedtime access to devices close to bedtime three or more times a week also experienced less sleep and lower quality of sleep compared to children with less or no device access. Researchers speculate that access, even without use, can exert an influence on sleep because children are thinking about different aspects of the device, such as text messaging (e.g., "Has someone responded to that message I sent earlier?").

Ready to limit your children's (or your own) screen time? [Click here](#) for three ways to get started. For more information on another potential negative health consequence of excessive smartphone / tablet use, [click here](#).

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