

[IMAGE]

Turn Off the TV and Tune Into Health

By Editorial Staff

Does your child seem to spend the entire day in front of the TV, on the computer or playing video games? Here's an important reason why you should encourage them to get up off the couch and get moving.

An article in the March 2008 issue of the *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine* found that turning off the TV and the computer helps young children improve their health. A group of 70 overweight children ages 4 to 7 were placed into one of two groups. One group (the intervention group) used an automatic monitoring device placed on the family TV and computer to keep track of time in use, along with an intervention program to reward children for reducing TV and computer use. The other group (the control group) had no such device or intervention.

Results after 24 months were quite amazing. Children in the intervention group reduced their television viewing by 17.5 hours per week, as compared to only 5.2 hours for the control group. More importantly, the intervention group also reduced its body mass index (BMI), while the control group's BMI increased. Members of the intervention group also significantly reduced overall food intake compared to the control group. The researchers concluded, "Reducing television viewing and computer use may have an important role in preventing obesity and in lowering BMI in young children."

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So, what does this mean for you and your kids? Fighting the war against obesity is as simple as getting your kids off the couch and away from that computer or TV screen (and the endless array of snacks kids usually keep on hand). Spend more time doing healthy family activities - whether it's walking the dog or playing Frisbee in the park - and your children will be on their way to a healthier lifestyle. Now *that's* something worth watching.

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