

[IMAGE]

## Too Much TV Can Lead to Depression

By Editorial Staff

Much like the movies, television is frequently where we turn to "escape" the world; it lets us forget about our daily stresses and worries for an hour or two (or more) and enter an alternate universe of sorts, one filled with (depending on your viewing preferences) monsters, professional athletes, action heroes and more. If that weren't enough, television is increasingly satisfying our need for information, whether it's breaking news, the latest weather or a how-to show on cooking or home improvement. In fact, no matter what our needs are, these days, TV always seems to be there to satisfy it.

But there are drawbacks to our increasing dependence on the boob tube, some of which have been documented via research. Studies show that the more television children watch, the more likely they are to become overweight and to have problems with attention span. And according to a recent study involving adolescents, excessive television viewing can do something else: increase the risk of suffering depression, an all-too-common condition with potentially serious consequences. According to the study, adolescents who reported "more television use had significantly greater odds of developing depression for each additional hour of daily television use. In addition, those reporting more total media exposure had significantly greater odds of developing depression for each additional hour of daily use."

TV and sofa - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Interestingly enough, the researchers did not find the same relationship to depression for adolescents who were exposed to videocassettes, computer games, or radio. For parents, that's an important distinction, because it means that reducing your children's overall exposure to these items apparently won't cut it; if they're spending excessive time watching TV, reducing that time is what needs to happen to reduce your children's risk of suffering depression.

What's excessive? The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children be exposed to no more than one to two hours of "total media time" per day. Isn't that a good idea for everyone, regardless of age? Talk to your doctor to learn more.

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