



Choosing Foods for Me

Fourth-grade nutrition education newsletter

Lesson 10

Too much screen time!

Too much screen time (TV, video games, computers) contributes to increasing youth obesity. Youth spend too much time being inactive and not enough time being active. A 2010 Henry J. Kaiser Foundation survey found that children 8 – 18 years old spent about 7 ½ hours each day using entertainment media, 4 ½ hours watching TV, 1 ½ hours on the computer and more than an hour playing video games. Too much sitting is not good for our health and can cause us to gain weight. When we watch TV, we see ads for foods high in fat and sugar, which may lead to making unhealthy food choices.



What can you do to combat too much screen time?

- Get on your feet! Use television commercial breaks as an opportunity to walk in place, do jumping jacks or other physical activities with your child or other family members.
- Get together as a family to write a list of things to do other than watch TV or other screen time activities. Post these ideas on the refrigerator.
- During family meals, turn off the TV and talk about everyone's day.
- Keep TV off when no one is watching it. Need some background noise? Turn on the radio.
- Create an activity box and put it by the door. The activity box can include jump ropes, balls and everyone's athletic shoes. This reminds everyone to be active. Make active time, family time. Get together to walk to the park, bike or visit your local farmers market.



Try a new activity. Throw lightweight scarves in the air. Keep them in the air as you turn around in a circle and do other moves.

Looking for new ways to be active?

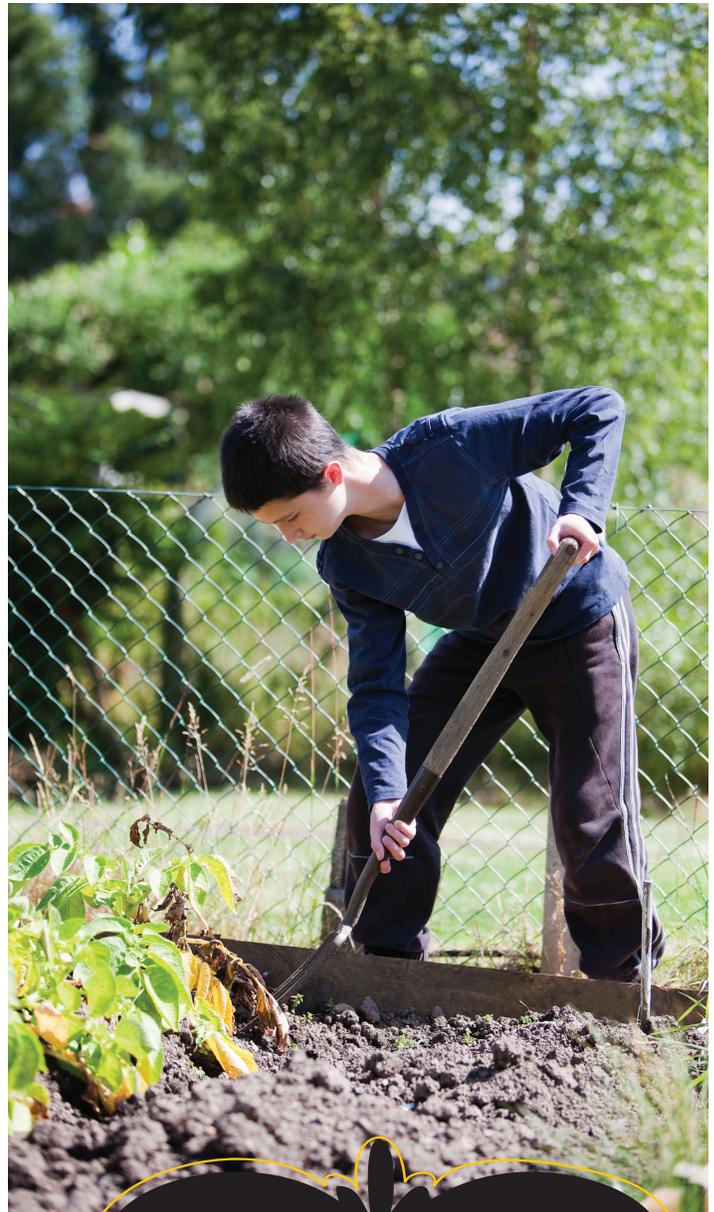
- Play flashlight tag in the dark.
- Plant a garden and get active maintaining it.
- Dance to music. Make up new dance moves.
- Play indoor balloon volleyball as a family. Try to keep the balloon in the air.
- Throw lightweight scarves in the air. Keep them in the air as you turn around in a circle and do other moves.

Now comes the hard part ...

These tips can help decrease your child's screen time. They are a challenge but not impossible!

- Set time limits: no more than two hours of screen time a day.
- Keep TV sets out of children's bedrooms. It's easier to monitor use when they are out in the open.

Plant a garden, and get active maintaining it.



Remember to make active time, family time. If your children see you being active, they are more likely to be more active, too.

Sign up for a free e-newsletter at missourifamilies.org/newsletter/