

Limiting TV time—Effective strategy for preventing weight gain in children

August 27 2012

Reducing television viewing may be an effective strategy to prevent excess weight gain among adolescents, according to a new study released in the September/October 2012 issue of the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

Findings were based on a one-year community-based randomized trial that enrolled 153 adults and 72 adolescents from the same households. During that year, researchers from the University of Minnesota, School of Public Health Obesity Prevention Center conducted six face-to-face group meetings, sent monthly newsletters, and set-up 12 home-based activities. In addition, each household agreed to allow researchers to attach a "TV Allowance" to all televisions in the household for the one-year study period. [Television viewing](#) hours, diet, and physical activity levels were measured before and after the intervention.

A clear association was observed among adolescents between reduction in TV hours and decreased weight gain over one year. The TV hours' impact on weight gain was not significant for adults. These findings suggest that television viewing is a risk for excess weight gain among adolescents. The implication is that parents who limit their adolescents' television viewing may help their adolescent maintain a healthy body weight. According to [national survey](#) data [NHANES] 2003-2006, about 31% of US children and adolescents are overweight or obese, therefore finding the causes for weight gain in this population is growing increasingly important.

According to Simone A. French, PhD, principal investigator of this study and the Director of the University of Minnesota's [Obesity Prevention](#) Center, "We tried to intervene on behaviors that are related to [energy balance](#), such as television viewing, sugar-sweetened [beverage intake](#), physical activity, and consumption of packaged convenience foods. Although the individual contribution of each of these behaviors to excess weight gain and obesity may be small, it is important to examine their possible role individually and together in promoting excess weight gain. Associations between these behaviors and risk for excess weight gain may differ among adults and adolescents because of their different physical and social developmental stages."

"This study is an important piece of evidence that reducing TV hours is a powerful weight gain prevention strategy parents can use to help prevent excess weight gain among their children by changing the home environment and household television viewing norms."

Provided by Elsevier

Citation: Limiting TV time—Effective strategy for preventing weight gain in children (2012, August 27) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-08-limiting-tv-timeeffective-strategy-weight.html>

| |
|--|
| <p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p> |
|--|