

# Fewer meals eaten in front of television after intervention

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(HealthDay)—A brief primary care intervention for preschool-aged children and their parents reduces the number of meals eaten in front of the television but does not reduce overall screen time or body mass index (BMI), according to research published online Nov. 5 in *Pediatrics*.

Catherine S. Birken, M.D., of the University of Toronto, and colleagues conducted a [randomized controlled trial](#) involving a primary care pediatric group practice to determine whether a brief intervention for 160 3-year-old preschool children could be effective in reducing screen time, meals in front of the television, and BMI.

The researchers found that, after one year, neither mean total weekday nor weekend day minutes of television viewing time was reduced compared with the no-intervention group. After adjusting for BMI at baseline, the number of weekday meals in front of the television was statistically significantly reduced, from 1.9 before the intervention to 1.6 after, but child BMI and number of televisions in the bedroom were not affected.

"This pragmatic trial of a brief intervention in the primary care setting was not effective in reducing screen time or BMI in 3-year-old children," the authors write. "In addressing screen time and obesity [prevention interventions](#) in primary care, identifying which behaviors to target, how best to format and deliver the intervention, integration of interventions across settings, and an assessment of cost-effectiveness should be a focus for future research."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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