

# Little exercise and heavy use of electronic media constitute a significant health risk for children

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The Physical Activity and Nutrition in Children Study, PANIC, carried out by the Institute of Biomedicine at the University of Eastern Finland shows that low levels of physical activity combined with heavy use of electronic media and sedentary behaviour are linked to an increased risk for type 2 diabetes and vascular diseases already in 6-8 year-old children.

The study was published in *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, an esteemed journal in the field of exercise and nutrition.

Heavy use of [electronic media](#) has [adverse health effects](#) also in [children](#) who are physically active

Carried out at the University of Eastern Finland, the study showed that low levels of physical activity - and unstructured physical activity in particular - are linked to increased risk factors for type 2 [diabetes](#) and vascular diseases in children. Furthermore, heavy use of electronic media, and especially watching too much TV and videos, was linked to higher levels of risk factors in children. The highest levels of risk factors were found in children with lowest levels of physical activity and highest levels of electronic media time. Heavy use of electronic media, and especially watching too much TV and videos, increased the levels of risk factors not only in sedentary children, but also in children who are

physically active. Moreover, irregular eating frequency and an unhealthy diet were linked to increased risk factors for [type 2 diabetes](#) and vascular diseases. These nutrition-related factors partially explain the link between heavy use of electronic media and the risk factors.

Prevention of type 2 diabetes and vascular diseases best begun in childhood

The PANIC Study has earlier shown that the cumulation of risk factors for type 2 diabetes and vascular diseases in people who are overweight begins already in childhood. This is a major concern because the cumulation of [risk factors](#) in childhood significantly increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, vascular diseases and premature death in adulthood. According to this recently published study, regular exercise and avoiding excessive use of electronic media constitute efficient means of preventing type 2 diabetes and [vascular diseases](#).

The PANIC Study - a source of scientifically valuable data on children's health

The Physical Activity and Nutrition in Children Study, the PANIC Study, is an on-going lifestyle intervention study. A total of 512 children aged 6 to 8 years participated in the onset measurements in 2007-2009. The study applies scientifically sound methods to extensively study the lifestyles, health and well-being of children. The study provides novel information on children's [physical activity](#) and sedentary behaviour, nutrition, physical condition, body composition, metabolism, vascular system, brain function, oral health, life quality, effects of exercise and nutrition on children's health and well-being, and their effects on health care costs.

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