

Just how harmful is TV for your health?

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(HealthDay)—Cautions about TV viewing are as old as television itself, but how bad is it really?

A number of studies cite health risks due to the link between a [sedentary lifestyle](#) and the number of hours spent watching the tube.

Young adults who watch three or more hours of TV a day and get little exercise have a greater chance of cognitive issues in midlife, according to a 25-year study published in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

The same amount of TV time could also double the risk of early death compared to watching an hour or less each day, according to research published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*.

People who watch TV for five or more hours a day have more than double the risk of dying from a blood clot in the lungs compared to those who watch 2-1/2 hours a day, according to a study in the journal *Circulation*.

Again, this is likely due to all the sitting involved.

What's the answer? It's a two-pronged approach. Cut back to one to two hours of TV *and* increase the amount of moderate-intensity exercise you do to between 60 and 75 minutes every day. According to research published in *The Lancet*, this won't completely eliminate the increased risks associated with TV time, but it can certainly lessen them. It also helps to find more movement-oriented pastimes to replace the other hours of TV viewing.

Remember that the [health risks](#) come from day-in, day-out prolonged TV viewing. If you skip it most days during the week, occasionally binge-watching a series shouldn't be too harmful. Just take 15-minute movement or stretching breaks between episodes and resist the urge to munch on high-calorie treats as you watch.

More information: Do your children watch too much TV, too? The

nonprofit GreatSchools.org has tips to help [kids cut TV time](#) and benefit the whole family.

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