



Is It Time to **Pull the Plug** on Your Teen's Bedroom

Does it seem like your teenager spends too much time watching television? Do conversations about your teen's viewing habits and the possibility of limiting screen time usually go nowhere?

If so, you are not alone. According to the University of Michigan Health System, 71% of children (ages 8-18) have a television in their bedroom. Oftentimes, parents feel overwhelmed when it comes to monitoring their kids' television time. Most either overreact by over-monitoring all technology, all of the time, or underreact by allowing their teens to watch whatever they want, for as long as they want, any time they want, without supervision or limits.

Benefits of Removing a Bedroom TV

If your teen has a television in his or her room, there is a simple, practical solution for reducing that type of screen time. **Remove the television!** It's a decision backed by research and one we wholeheartedly endorse. Here's why:

- **Your teen will get more sleep.** Removing a TV from the bedroom improves sleep quality and allows teens to go to sleep sooner.
- **There is less chance your teen can watch inappropriate programming.**

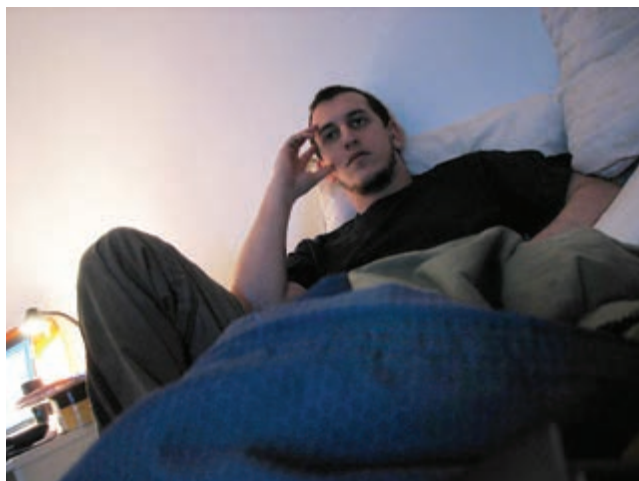
[continued >](#)

- **Your teen's interpersonal skills can improve.** If everyone has their own television, there's no need to communicate with each other about what to watch. However, if there are limited TV screens, your teen must learn how to share, take turns and negotiate with other family members on viewing choices. This may lead to some disputes at first, but it will eventually help your teen learn how to manage adversity and make decisions as part of your family "team."
- **You'll have more quality family time.** Watching TV together as a family provides more opportunities to strengthen relationships than watching in isolation. Choosing programs the whole family can watch creates opportunities to bond with your teen and to learn more about what's going on in his or her life.
- **Your teen will have more time for other activities.** Encourage your teen to get involved in or to join you in activities like outdoor recreation, music lessons, sports, reading, volunteering, painting and gardening.

Convinced to Pull the Plug Yet?

A study in *Pediatrics* magazine also found that 16% of teens with bedroom TVs watch more than five hours of television a day. The American Academy of Pediatrics backs up all this research with its recommendation to remove TVs from children's bedrooms or not put them there at all.

Removing a TV from your teen's bedroom is a big decision for you and will mean a big change for your teen. The best way to approach it is to talk about it as a family. Calmly explain to your teen why this is a good idea, citing the benefits listed earlier and the health concerns research has tied to excessive TV viewing. Help your teen understand that you want to take positive steps to ensure he or she is healthy. Your teen may be upset at first, and that's okay and natural. But in the long run, it's a healthy decision that will benefit your whole family.



References

- Barr-Anderson, D.J., van den Berg, P., Neumark-Sztainer, D., & Story, M. (2008). Characteristics associated with older adolescents who have a television in their bedrooms. *Pediatrics*, 121(4), 718-724.
- Adachi-Meja, A.M., Longacre, M.R., Gibson, J.J., Beach, M.L., Titus-Ernstoff, L.T., & Dalton, M.A. (2007). Children with a TV in their bedroom at higher risk for being overweight. *International Journal of Obesity (Lond.)*, 31(4), 644-651.
- Kamenetz, A. (2018). *The art of screen time: How your family can balance digital media & real life*. New York, NY: Public Affairs.

➡ **For more information** or to make an appointment at the Boys Town Center for Behavioral Health, call **531-355-3358**.

Visit **BoysTown.org/Parenting** for more information from the parenting experts at Boys Town.

