

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

# *Can social media be harmful to teen's health?*



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With the growing popularity of computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones, our teens have a variety of ways of social networking. According to recent studies, 93 percent of teens either own or have access to a computer or laptop.

In addition, national teen survey studies have shown that 33 percent use Twitter, 71 percent use Facebook, and 52 percent use Instagram. While there may be pros and cons to being virtually engaged in the vast online applications and platforms that exist, too much screen can be harmful to a teen's health.

**See Question, Page 8D**



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Studies have shown a link between an excessive amount of time spent on media use and teen health problems.

## Question

Continued from Page 1D

Studies have shown a link between an excessive amount of time spent on media use and teen health problems such as obesity, problems with school, sleep disturbances, mood disorders, and behavior problems. This is why it is important for parents to not only stay informed in what their teens and tweens are exploring online but also how much time they spend doing so.

A few helpful tips for parents include:

- » 1. Learn about social media firsthand and create your own profile. This will allow you to befriend your teens and tweens online and also share your social media use and practices with them
- » 2. Along with asking your teens/tweens about their daily activities, school assignments, and after-school chores, also ask about what they have been chatting about online
- » 3. Keep the computer or laptop in a public space within the home. This will allow you to monitor their online dialogue and screen time
- » 4. Set screen time limits and phone use limits each day for your teens and tweens to ensure adequate school-work and family activity time throughout the day. Screen time used for entertainment should be less than two hours per day
- » 5. For older teens, be sure to discuss the importance of not texting while driving, riding a bike, babysitting, or doing activities that would require their full attention.

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