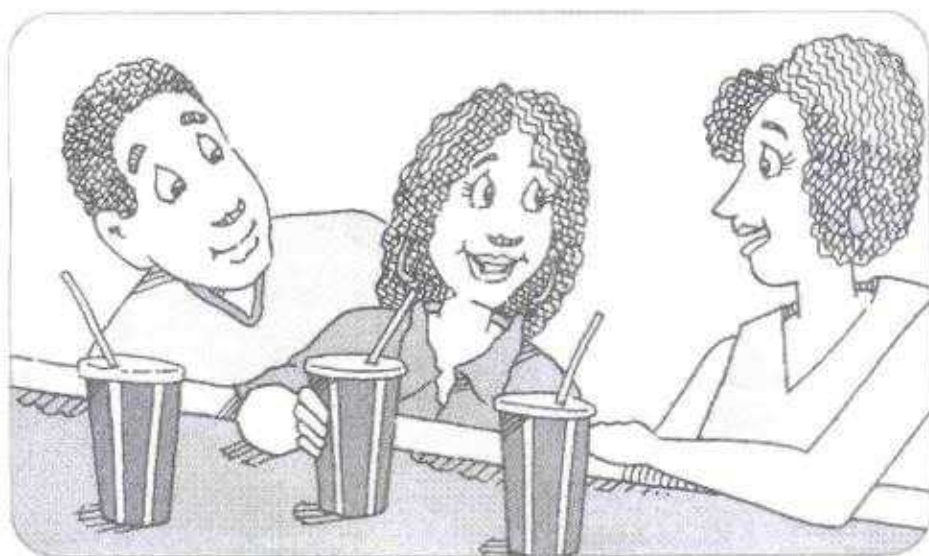


Parents

still make the difference!



Help your middle schooler stay healthy over the summer months

Experts agree that there is a direct link between student health and academic achievement. And the end of the school year shouldn't signal the end of your preteen's healthful habits!

- Over the summer, be sure to:
- **Maintain routines.** Don't throw your preteen's bedtime—or alarm clock—out the window just because it's vacation. Instead, remain on some sort of regular schedule, even if the actual bedtime (or waking time) gets pushed back a little.
 - **Encourage your child to move.** Summer break isn't for sitting around, so get your preteen moving! Help your child find an enjoyable activity—such as

jogging, hiking, skateboarding, etc.—and encourage it often. Better yet, get the whole family involved. Exercise benefits everyone.

- **Eat dinner together.** Your preteen may be lured outdoors by longer, warmer days, but make sure your family comes together for dinner. Eating together is a terrific way to stay connected.
- **Be a good role model.** Your preteen takes "healthful habits" cues from what you do—not what you say. So don't simply *tell* your preteen how to do positive things for health. Do them for yourself, too!

Source: "Top 10 Ways to Help Children Develop Healthy Habits," American Heart Association, www.americanheart.org/preventer/jhms?identifier=3030485.

Researchers review effects of screen time



You've heard it before: Too much time in front of a screen is not good for your child. But research published last December makes that crystal clear. And summer—when kids have plenty of time on their hands—may be the most important time for parents to pay attention.

Researchers reviewed 173 studies dealing with the effect of media on children's health. Results of their review were startling. They showed:

- **Children on average spend almost as much time each week with media as they do with their parents *and* in school.** Media time was almost 45 hours. Parent time was 17 hours. School time was 30 hours.
- **Eighty percent of studies showed that lots of media time linked up with more childhood obesity, smoking, early sexual behavior, drinking, drug use and poor school performance.**

Be sure to set clear limits on the amount of time your preteen is "plugged in" this summer!

Source: Donna St. George, "Media Bombardment Is Linked to 11 Effects During Childhood," Dec. 2, 2008, *The Washington Post*, www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/01/AR2008120102970.html