

# Be a ROLE MODEL

- Your child is watching you, even when you're watching TV! Keep your TV viewing to less than two hours per day.
- Your child will be more likely to try new healthy food after seeing you eat and enjoy it.
- Plan your meals as a family. Think of ways your child can help prepare food, for example, washing the vegetables.
- Live an active life. It's good for your child to see you enjoying all kinds of activities – gardening, biking, walking or playing sports.
- Take part in a charity run or walk as a family team!



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## SCREEN TIME

"Screen time" is time spent watching TV and movies, playing video games or playing on a computer (not including homework time).

It is important to limit how much time your child spends in front of a screen as part of a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

### Did you know?

- Children in Nova Scotia spend **almost five hours a day** in front of a screen.
- Too much screen time is linked to:
  - Low physical activity
  - Unhealthy snacking
  - Attention and learning problems
  - Sleeping problems
  - High blood pressure
  - Unhealthy body weight
  - Type 2 diabetes

### Healthy screen time habits:

- No TV or computer for children under 2 years of age.
- Less than one hour of screen time each day for children ages 2-5.
- After age 5, less than two hours of screen time each day.

### Ideas for your family:

- Turn off the TV when no one is watching and during meal times.
- Keep TVs, DVD players, computers and video games out of your child's bedroom.

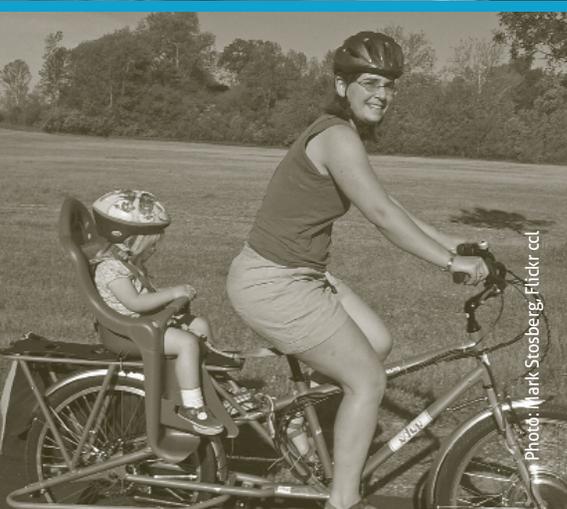


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## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Balance family screen time with physical activity. By getting out and moving more, your child will have more energy and self-confidence.

### Did you know?

- Less than 50% of children and youth in Nova Scotia get the daily recommended amount of exercise.
- Children and youth (5-18 years) need 60 minutes of physical activity every day, which should be moderate to vigorous at least three days per week (e.g. running, playground activities, swimming or biking).

### Ideas for your family:

- Go for a walk, or to a park or playground with your family.
- Walk or bike with your child to school.
- Spend time together in your yard – raking leaves, gardening or playing games.
- Look into local sports programs for children. Try local recreation or Scouting/Girl Guide programs.

## HEALTHY EATING

It is important to plan healthy meals, snacks and drinks for your family as part of an overall healthy lifestyle.

### Did you know?

- 77% of children in Nova Scotia do not eat enough vegetables and fruit.
- A healthy breakfast is key to children making healthier eating choices for the rest of the day. In Nova Scotia, only 62% of boys and 53% of girls eat breakfast every day.

### Ideas for your family:

- Keep washed, cut-up vegetables and fruit in the fridge for a quick snack (fresh, canned and frozen are all healthy).
- Try a dip with your vegetables and fruit (yogurt, peanut butter, low fat salad dressing or hummus).
- Add vegetables and fruit to soups, rice, pasta, pizza, cereal and yogurt.
- Limit sugary drinks like juice, pop and sports drinks.

For more ideas, visit: [www.participation.com](http://www.participation.com) and [www.dietitians.ca/eatwell](http://www.dietitians.ca/eatwell).

# HEALTHY HABITS, HEALTHY FAMILIES

## Consider that....

- In the past, most kids played outside after school and there were fewer fast food restaurants.
- Today, less than half of all children and youth are active enough, and most do not eat enough vegetables and fruit.
- Children in Nova Scotia spend almost five hours a day in front of a screen.

## ...What is wrong with this picture?

Too much screen time can lead to less physical activity, which has a negative impact on health. TV ads that promote unhealthy food choices can lead to unhealthy eating habits. You can help your child lead a healthier life by setting limits on screen time, and encouraging physical activity and healthy food choices.



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## BALANCING SCREEN TIME, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & HEALTHY EATING



IWK Health Centre  
Primary Health



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The IWK Health Centre provides quality care to women, children, youth and families in the Maritimes and beyond. For more information, please visit [www.iwk.nshealth.ca](http://www.iwk.nshealth.ca).

To download a copy of this pamphlet, please visit the Healthy Families section of our website and search under "Pamphlets Produced by the IWK."



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