

Too Much Screen Time?



Winter is here, and the cold weather often keeps us indoors. We may prefer to stay warm and cozy in front of a TV or computer with some snack foods.

Watching TV and using a computer are ways to be entertained, learn new things and communicate. However, too much “screen time” is linked with weight gain.

Do you know the answers to these questions?

1. About how many hours do children, on average, spend daily on “screen time” (*watching TV or DVDs, playing video games or working on a computer*)?
 - a. 2 hours
 - b. 4 hours
 - c. 6 hours
 - d. 8 hours
2. According to doctors and other health professionals, what should the maximum daily screen time be for kids?
 - a. 1 to 2 hours
 - b. 3 to 4 hours
 - c. 5 to 6 hours
 - d. 7 to 8 hours

The answers are 1. c. 2. a.

Not only are kids sitting too much, but they also are exposed to thousands of food commercials every year. Many of the foods advertised are high in calories, fat, added sweeteners and/or sodium.

What Can You Do?

- Limit screen time for kids to one to two hours per day. Consider your own screen time, too, and be a good role model.
 - Consider active video games as a way to reach physical activity goals. Kids need about 60 minutes of physical activity on most days. Adults need about 30 minutes.
- Remember the purpose of food commercials: selling you things. Compare Nutrition Facts labels when you are buying groceries.
- Avoid eating in front of the TV. If you do not pay attention to what you are eating, you may eat more than you think.
 - To manage your portions, put a serving of the snack food into a small bowl instead of eating from the box. People who eat directly from the box usually eat more food.
 - For a crunchy snack, try apple slices with yogurt dip or carrot sticks with light Ranch dip.

Winter Activities for Everyone

- Turn on some music and dance.
- Use an exercise DVD/video.
- Try sledding, skating, snowshoeing or cross-country skiing.
- Walk at a mall, gym or other facility in your community.

For more information, visit www.ndsu.edu/eatsmart.

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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I use a lot of packaged foods such as rice or pasta mixes when serving my family dinner. I've heard they're often high in sodium. What could I use in place of these packaged side dishes that still have flavor and are not time-consuming to prepare?

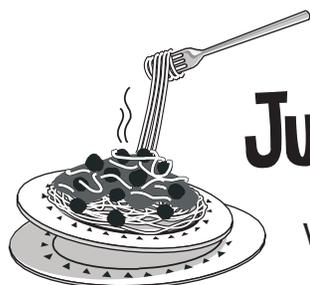
You're right: Packaged side mixes often are high in sodium and sometimes high in fat, too. Although they are OK to use occasionally, choosing other options will be better for your family's health. Try these homemade, healthful side dishes:

- **Veggies of all colors:** Try them raw, steamed, stir-fried, grilled or roasted. Add a salad to your menu in addition to a vegetable. A variety of greens mixed together with a bit of dressing is a delicious and colorful side to any meal.
- **Pasta:** Saute pasta with just a splash of oil and garlic as a tasty side dish. Try adding a teaspoon of Parmesan cheese for extra flavor.
- **Rice:** Try brown rice for a nutty flavor. Cooking rice in reduced-sodium chicken broth or tomato juice instead of water enhances flavor. Or mix it with salsa for a great Tex-Mex flavor.



Cooking Shortcuts

- When you're chopping veggies, such as onions or celery, for one casserole, chop enough for another casserole or soup. Store the veggies in air-tight containers or zip-top bags in your refrigerator and use within a few days.
- Invest in some time-saving equipment, such as a small scoop for making meatballs.



Just for Fun

Where did the spaghetti go to dance?

Answer: The meat ball!

Baked Meatballs

- 1½ pounds lean or extra-lean ground beef
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 c. quick-cooking oats
- 6½ ounces nonfat evaporated milk
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. garlic (garlic powder can be used)
- 1 Tbsp. chili powder
- ½ c. onion, chopped fine

Menu Idea
Baked Meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, cooked carrots, canned pears and low-fat milk.

Place ground beef in a large bowl (or use a mixer) and mix in the egg. Next, using clean hands, add the oats and mix thoroughly. Pour in the evaporated milk, seasonings and onion and mix. Form beef mixture into 32 approximately 1-inch balls (or use a small scoop). Place balls into a sprayed baking pan and bake at 375 F for 20 to 25 minutes, until they are brown and reach an internal temperature of 160 degrees. Drain fat and serve immediately or freeze in meal-sized portions in zip-type bags.

Makes eight servings, four meatballs each.

Per serving: 220 calories, 10 grams (g) of fat, 10 g of carbohydrate, 1 g of fiber and 90 milligrams of sodium.

Note: To make easy "gravy," in a sauce pan heat 16 baked meatballs with a can of reduced-sodium mushroom soup diluted with a half can of water. (Makes four servings.)

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Please call for more information on nutrition, food purchasing or food safety.



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