

# Decrease Television Viewing

## **Background and Rationale**

Although the American Academy of Pediatrics (1) recommends no screen time for children under two years of age and no more than 1-2 hours per day for children two and over, watching television (TV) is a common sedentary activity among American children. A recent survey found that 61% of children under age two use screen media and 43% watch TV every day, and 41% of 2- to 3-year-olds and 43% of 4- to 6-year-olds use screen media for 2 hours or more on an average day (2). Children 8-18 years of age watch an average of 3 hours of television every day (3). Fifty-nine percent of U.S. adults report watching more than 2 hours a day of television (4). More time is spent watching television by African

American and Hispanic children than white children, and, among children

Studies have found a positive association between the number of hours children and adults watch television and the prevalence of overweight and obesity (3-5), and a school-based intervention has shown that children who reported a decrease in time watching television also had a decrease in body mass index (BMI) (7). Research also shows a link between TV viewing in childhood and obesity in adulthood (8-9). Proposed mechanisms for the relationship between TV viewing and obesity include a reduction of resting metabolic rate while watching TV, displacement of physical activity, excess energy intake while watching TV, and exposure to marketing of high-energy-dense foods (8-9).

## ***References***

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