



LIFESTYLE

How technology affects women's health

The gadget revolution created new ways of working, sharing information, and having fun. With tens of billions of internet-connected devices around the world, technology surrounds us like never before. Technology has many positive aspects – helping us stay connected to others, which has been a lifeline throughout the pandemic. But alongside the benefits, there are also potential health consequences that should be considered. In this overview, we explore the effects of technology overuse and the negative and positive impacts of technology on health.

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS)

The human eye is not adapted to staring at a single point in space for hours on end. If you log significant time in front of a computer monitor, you may have experienced CVS.

Insomnia

Working into the evening face-to-face with an illuminated monitor can play havoc with your internal clock. Even more strong factors for a restless night can be activities like late-night mobile surfing.

Repetitive Stress Injuries

The constant tiny movements needed to manoeuvre a mouse or type on a keyboard can irritate tendons; swelling can press on nerves. As little as a half hour a day of computer mouse use could put you at risk.

Musculoskeletal Issues

Looking down at an electronic

gadget for long periods can lead to neck and back pain and pain in elbows, wrists, and hands. In addition, laptop and smartphone usage can involve people sitting in positions consistent with poor ergonomic function and positioning.

Obesity

There's a much more direct relationship between obesity and the adoption of a digital lifestyle. It is influenced by those who lead a sedentary life without any involvement in physical activities. As more people engage with the digital ecosystem on a daily basis, it has led to an increase in obesity across ages, even in kids.

Hearing Damage

Even when we're out and about, we take our electronics with us, often in the form of iPods or other digital music players. It's nice to be insulated from the hurly-burly of modern life, but listening to music through headphones can increase the risk of hearing loss.

Office-related Asthma

Your sleek, high-tech office may be a source of indoor air pollution. Some laser printer models shoot invisible

particles into the air as they chug away. These ultra-fine particles can lodge deep in your lungs.

Tips for using technology in a healthy way

Some tips for ensuring valuable screen time include:

- Remove unnecessary apps from your phone to prevent you from constantly checking them for updates.
- Set screen time limits and stick to them.
- Log off and take regular breaks.
- Review and maximize your privacy settings on social media. Be selective about what you want to post and who you want to see it.
- Keep meal times gadget-free.
- Keep electronic devices out of your bedroom. Turn clocks and other glowing devices towards the wall at bedtime. Avoid using digital devices for at least an hour before going to bed.
- Use the internet to stay connected but prioritize real-world relationships over virtual ones¹.


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FITNESS

Keeping fit with a colourful plate of fruits and veggies

There is a rainbow of fruits and vegetables that offer several health benefits! Fruits and vegetables get their colours from phytochemicals and may help to prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes.

Additionally, the colours of the fruits and vegetables we eat can hint at their nutritional value. For example, dark leafy greens are a good source of folate. At the same time, red and orange fruits and vegetables are often a good source of Vitamin A. Eating a rainbow of colourful fruits and vegetables can help provide vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients needed for a healthy, well-balanced diet such as antioxidants, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, potassium, and fibre. Following are some factors that can affect your blood sugar levels. Include as many plant-based colours in your meals and snacks as possible to get started. Each colour provides various health benefits, and no colour is superior to another, so a balance of all colours is most important. Getting the most phytonutrients also means eating colourful skins, the richest sources of phytonutrients, and paler flesh. Avoid peeling foods like apples, peaches and eggplant, lest you lose their most concentrated source of beneficial chemicals. When we eat plant foods, phytonutrients protect us from chronic diseases. Phytonutrients have potent

anti-cancer and anti-heart disease effects. And epidemiological research suggests that food patterns that include fruits and vegetables are associated with a reduced risk of many chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, and may be protective against certain types of cancers. Listed below are some examples of fruits and vegetables that fall into the five main colour groups:

Red: Strawberries, blood oranges, grapefruit, cranberries, watermelon, red apples, raspberries, cherries, tomatoes, pomegranate, red grapes, beets, red peppers, radishes, red onions, tomatoes, rhubarb.

Yellow/Orange: Lemon, pineapples, mangoes, corn, oranges, persimmons, nectarines, tangerines, apricots, papayas, cantaloupe, peaches, carrots, butternut squash, pumpkin, yellow summer squash, sweet potatoes, and yams.

White: White nectarines, white peaches, bananas, cauliflower, garlic, ginger, mushrooms, onions, parsnips, potatoes, turnips and white corn.

Green: Pears, green apples, limes, avocados, honeydew, kiwis, green grapes, broccoli, artichokes,

arugula, asparagus, brussels sprouts, green beans, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, green onions, okra, peas, green peppers, snow peas, spinach, and zucchini.

Blue/Purple: Purple grapes, blackberries, plums, blueberries, boysenberries, raisins, eggplant, and purple cabbage.

Get closer to eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables by trying something new from the suggested list in your next meal or snack.

Although many experts differ on what food is the most nutritious or has the most antioxidants and disease-fighting capabilities, eating a well-balanced diet with various fruits and vegetables is essential. Regular exercise, portion control, and getting your daily dose of these 'super foods' can help keep you in tip-top shape and ready for the warm weather that lies ahead².


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LIVING WELL

Importance of regular check-ups and screenings

Diagnosing diseases early through regular screening tests is the best defence for treating the disease. It can be hard to keep up with the demands of everyday life, especially if you feel pulled in numerous directions. But the one place you shouldn't cut corners involves your preventive care. Regular health checks keep potential health issues at bay and nip any developing problems in the bud. In some cases, they can even save lives since issues such as breast cancer can be treated early, and preventive measures can be taken.

It is essential to see your doctor for regular health checks. The checks can pick up early signs of disease or illness so that you will get treatment earlier. A general check-up is recommended once a year. If you are at higher risk of a disease or condition, you may need to get checked more often.

Health screening monitors your well-being

Unlike scheduling an appointment because of a cold or flu, you must have health screenings to monitor your overall health and wellness. These screenings vary based on your age and individual needs, but they always focus on the following:

- Screening for medical issues
- Establishing a baseline for your general health
- Assessing your risk of future medical issues
- Encouraging a healthy lifestyle
- Updating vaccinations
- Building a trusted relationship with your provider

The benefits of recreational therapy

Recreational therapy is a planned, organized, and therapeutic recreation program. It's designed to help people gain social skills and participate in leisure group activities. The focus of recreational therapy programs is to help a person to:

- Get involved in leisure activities
- Gain or restore social functions
- Prevent the loss of physical abilities

Programs are designed to meet your abilities, needs, and interests, such as:

Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, to help ease stress and tension

- Stretching and limbering exercises
- Individual and group sports activities
- Leisure activities, such as arts and crafts, games, or dramatics
- Special outings, such as ball games, sightseeing, or picnics

How can recreational therapy benefit your health?

Recreational therapy has wide-ranging positive impacts on your physical and mental health. This is especially true when the therapy is designed around your interests and needs. Recreational therapy can make a difference in the lives of people.

Improves symptoms of depression

Many therapeutic recreation programs get people up and moving and stimulate their minds with engaging, creative tasks. Music therapy, art therapy, drama, and dance also positively affect depression

Health screening checks for many things

These screenings focus on your unique healthcare needs, especially your gynaecological health. The health checks are tailored to your age and lifestyle but always capture vital signs, such as weight, height, pulse, and blood pressure. These measurements help give general insights into your overall health.

Based on your age and sexual activity, the following also need to be performed:

- A physical exam
- Internal and external genital exam
- HIV and Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) testing
- Preventive screenings for cervical cancer or breast cancer

These health screenings also allow you to share any concerns about your health. These conversations can also help you build a relationship with your doctor.

Health screenings evolve along with you

Not only can health exams detect serious problems – such as cervical cancer – before you may notice any symptoms, but they can help you feel your best at every stage of life. That's because your health screenings evolve with your unique needs. For example, you may have questions about your period or body changes when you start puberty. This can also be a good time to get the Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

vaccine, which can protect you from STDs. Once you become sexually active, your health screenings will become a safe place to discuss healthy sexual relationships, birth control methods, and STD prevention and testing. And, as you prepare for pregnancy, these appointments can focus on having a healthy pregnancy. And, if you no longer want to have children, you can discuss more permanent birth control options. Finally, your health screenings will evolve as you move out of your reproductive years, from perimenopause to menopause and beyond.

Preventive health checks

Screening for ultrasound, Pap smear, and a mammogram is an important part of preventive healthcare for women. It can detect potential health issues early, prevent the development of certain health conditions, assess an individual's risk, and provide education and empowerment for individuals to take control of their health.

Make health screening a priority

It's easy to make excuses to skip your check-up. However, it would help if you considered this visit a non-negotiable meeting you cannot miss. Your health should be your number one priority. Start treating it that way and schedule your visits³.

Boosts cognitive abilities

Physical exercise, social engagement, and games that stimulate your brain (such as bridge, chess, and memory challenges) all improve the healthy functioning of your mind.

Relieves anxiety for those who are hospitalized

Being treated in a hospital is a stressful, fearful experience for anyone. Recreational therapy in a hospital may help reduce those negative feelings. This can be particularly important if someone visits hospitals repeatedly due to a chronic condition.

The bottom line

Recreational therapy uses leisure activities to promote recovery from illness, injury, or disability. Activities include art, dance, music, exercise, creative writing, and games.

Working with a trained recreational therapist can improve mood, reasoning, memory, physical fitness, and self-confidence. Researchers believe the combination of physical movement, creativity, social interaction, and mental engagement helps to deliver this wide range of health benefits. If recreational therapy could benefit you or someone, talk with your healthcare provider about possibly harnessing the power of play to achieve your health goals⁴.

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