



Lurie Children's Division of Ophthalmology

"Best Practices" on handling children's computer screen time during the COVID-19 pandemic

In general, limiting screen time is always a good thing for the comfort of your child's eyes and for their general activity, health, and wellbeing. Extended use can lead to digital eye strain and concerns of nearsightedness (myopia) progression. During the ongoing pandemic, we understand that screen use is unavoidable in certain circumstances, particularly with the need for e-learning. Here are some helpful tips on good screen hygiene:

- **Appropriate Spacing**

Try to keep your child's computer monitor about an adult arm's length away (goal: 18-24 inches) from their face and positioned at eye level with them sitting upright. This avoids the excessive eye strain that comes with focusing too close and also promotes good posture.

- **Appropriate Lighting**

Have good backlighting in the area your child is using the screen--such as open windows for sunlight or overhead room lighting that isn't too bright. Avoid dark or dimly lit rooms or bright lights in front of their face or against the screen (e.g., desk lamp next to the monitor), which will cause uncomfortable glare.

- **What About "Blue Light"?**

There is no proven harm or toxicity that comes from blue light in screens. Blue-filter lenses are not necessary but may subjectively feel more comfortable. You can also adjust display settings to "warm" the screen away from harsher white/blue light that may lead to discomfort

- **The 20-20-20 Rule**

Follow the 20-20-20 rule to avoid eye strain/fatigue that comes with prolonged near focusing.

This allows the eyes to relax and "reset":

- Every 20 minutes...
- Look away from the screen and off in the distance 20 feet...
- For 20 seconds|

- **Blinking Is Important**

Without realizing it, we likely don't blink as frequently as we should when staring at screens. Remind your child of the need to blink periodically. You could also use over-the-counter artificial tear drops or have a humidifier in the room to help prevent dry eye.

- **Don't Rub Your Eyes**

If your child's eyes feel irritated, advise that they avoid rubbing! This can aggravate the situation, and it's also important to avoid touching one's eyes, nose, and mouth to mitigate the spread of germs

- **No Screen Time Before Bed**

Avoid screen use just before bedtime, which can affect having good quality sleep

- **Play Time**

Remember to regularly get outside (weather permitting) and play!