

Let's Make It All Simple!



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Greater The Screen Time, Lesser The Eyesight

Do we realize that our eyes are now just caged within a smartphone screen?

Do we remember the colour of sky or the phase of the moon of yesterday night?

Do we realize that our vision of life is so beyond a smartphone screen?

The outbreak of Covid-19 has brought us so closer to technology than earlier. Our day starts from checking Morning notifications of Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Spending hours of afternoon in office work or online school/college lectures, Playing video games additively, to Binge watching movies/web series till Late night.

Our desire to work more, study more, entertain more, has caused immense pressure on our eyes resulting in headache, muscle pain around eyes leading to Myopia (Nearsightedness). A common vision condition in which one can see objects near to them clearly, but objects farther away are blurry.

"How ironic isn't it the beautiful eyes formed first during our birth tend to leave us first during our death! But how immense care do we take of them throughout our Life?"

Here are some of the facts that we are unaware of our eye's journey.

Our vision at birth is about same as it was at 36 weeks of pregnancy. Our eyes are physically capable of seeing, but brain isn't ready to process all that visual information so things stay fuzzy for a while. As visual pathway between our eyes & brain matures, we can see more colours. What a simply difficult journey is it to see clearly!

I agree we never imagined, we would be so much dependent on technology in 2020. But at least we can try to take care of our eyes with small steps like,

- Take at least one meal per day without screens.
- Set screen aside for 2 hours before bedtime.

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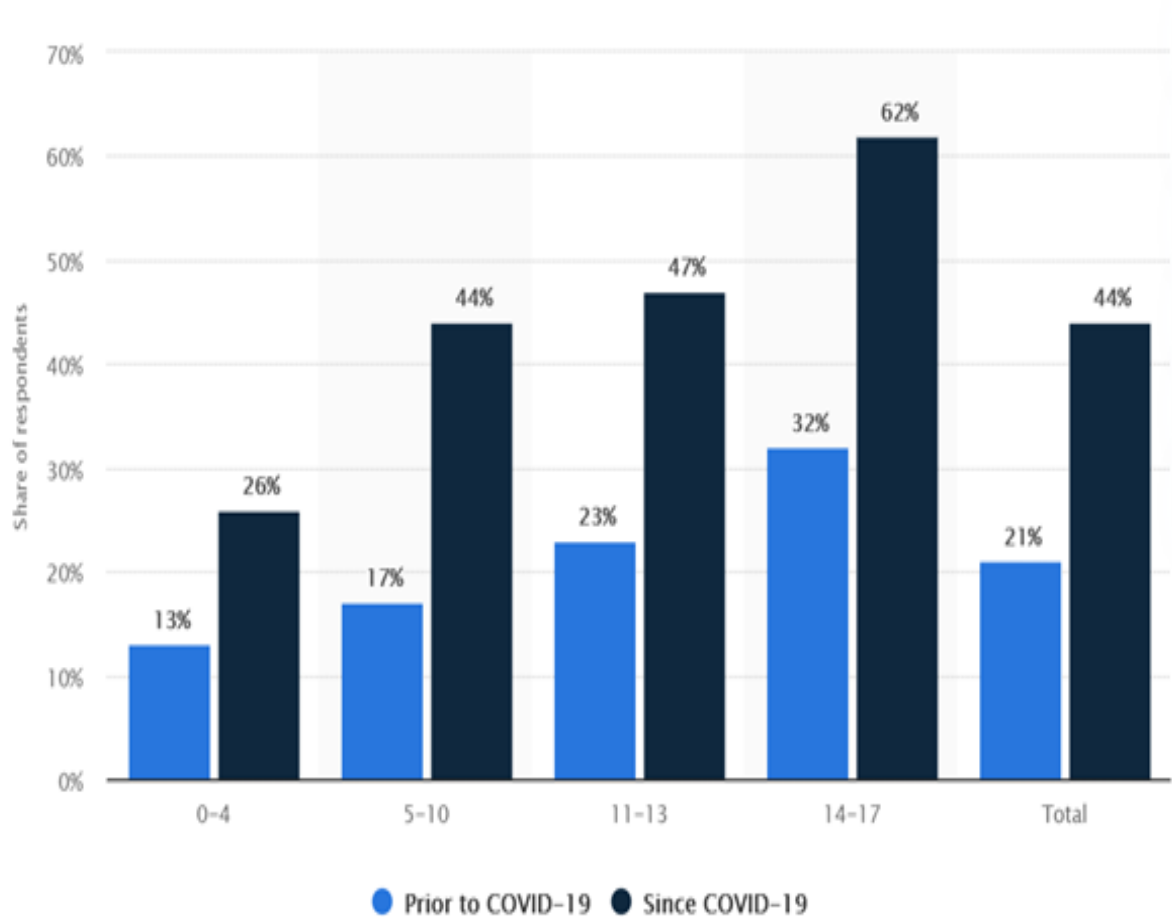
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What is the daily screen time during Covid-19?

Children and teens from the United States who spent more than 4 hours daily using electronic devices before and during Covid-19 pandemic according to parents as of June 2020, by age group.

Image Source: [statista.com](https://www.statista.com)



What are effects of excessive screen time?

- Reduced ability to focus on work.
- Depression and anxiety
- Insomnia
- Social media addiction
- Neck, shoulder and back pain
- Too much exposure to blue light leads to:
- **Digital eye strain:** Fatigue, dry eyes, bad lighting, cause eye strain.
- **Retina damage:** Causes vision problems like age related Macular degeneration.

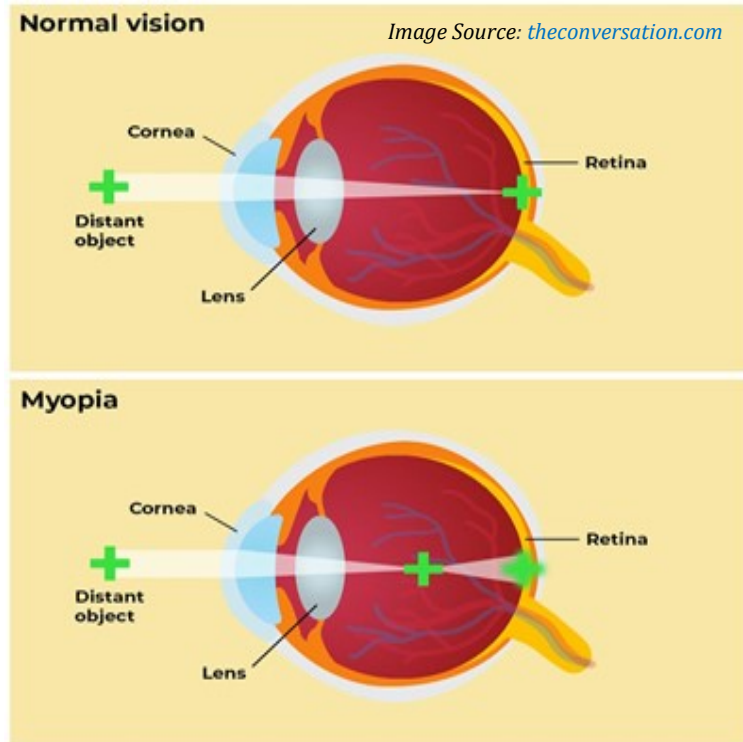
What measures to be taken to avoid digital eye strain?

- Based on recommendations from the American Academy of Ophthalmology screen time should include regular vision breaks.
- Following to 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- Increase the text size on devices to see screen content more easily.
- Use artificial tears or lubricant drops to relieve symptoms of dryness.
- Pay attention to your posture.

How excessive screen time in pandemic may accelerate myopia?

Computer use affects blink rate which in turn leads to symptomatic dry eye.

“Kids may not tell you but then they start blinking incessantly after computer are use and rubbing their eyes. When you read a book you move it around ,turn the pages and focusing is more variable. But when you use a computer, your distance and position don’t change and your eyes are fixed on the screen. When you constantly focus on a particular distance, especially if you have uncorrected refractive error, you probably will be focusing harder than you need to and for a prolonged period of time. This causes eye discomfort and muscle pain around eyes,” according to OSN Pediatrics/Strabismus Board Member Rudolph S.



What are immediate and long term consequences for excess screen time ?

It is too early to see the effects of increased screen time on vision, but parents reported their kids getting discomfort or pain while reading, headache, and eye fatigue,” OSN Pediatrics/Strabismus Board Member Rudolph S. Wagner, MD said.

Myopia is not just a problem that can be corrected with glasses. As myopic children become older, complications, may occur such as myopic (choroidal neovascularization), Glaucoma and retinal detachment.

Myopia is becoming more common

The number of people worldwide with myopia, or nearsightedness, has been rising, and that trend is projected to continue.

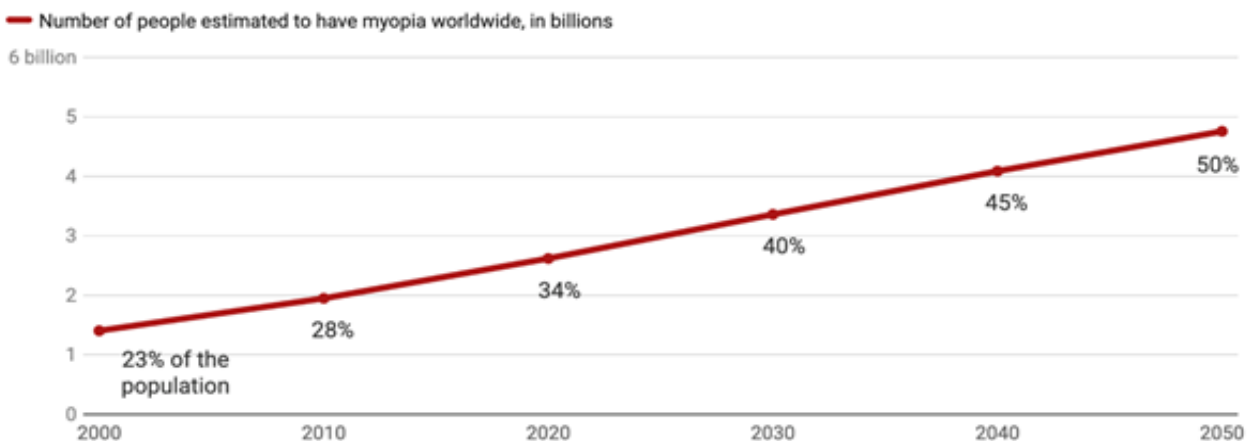


Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: B.A. Holden et al., 2016, Ophthalmology • Get the data

What measures must be taken to maintain ideal screen time?

- Screen usage not recommended for 1 year old infants and must be limited to no more than 1 hour per day for children 2-4 years old. Two hours a day for teens and adults.
- Set rules about screen time and follow them with discipline.
- Educate children to be vigilant about cyber fraud and how to seek support when facing any issues.
- Install latest software updates and antivirus programs on devices, set privacy settings to “high” and activate parental control features especially for younger children.
- Parents and teachers must remind children that watching television and doing online activity is one option for passing the time and emphasize other options for having fun such as cooking together, reading, board games, arts and crafts , dancing and exercising.
- Install device applications that allow parents to set limits , restricting the time of screen usage per day, to let them know how much time kids spend on digital devices, reminding them to disconnect and get a rest in between digital screen usage.

**Coming up next:
“Artificial Intelligence in
Healthcare ”**

Sources for this blog:

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