Wellness Snapshot

Managing Technology Overuse



Smartphones, computers, and other electronic devices are an important part of our daily lives. However, technology use can become problematic when devices start controlling your routines rather than supporting them.

What are some signs of problematic technology use?

Frequent device use alone does not necessarily indicate an addiction. Signs of problematic use may include difficulty controlling how much you use a device, feeling restless or irritable when you cannot access it, difficulty concentrating, sleep problems, or technology interfering with work, relationships or daily activities.

What can influence technology overuse?

Several factors can encourage you to spend more time on your devices:

1. **Fear of missing out (FOMO):** Feeling pressure to keep up with messages, news, trends, or social media updates can lead to repeated checking.
2. **Stress and emotional needs:** You may turn to technology for entertainment, distraction, information or social connection.
3. **Rewards and positive feedback:** Likes, comments, notifications, points, and achievements can encourage you to return to apps and devices repeatedly.

Tips for building healthier tech habits

1. **Set boundaries:** Establish specific times or places where you will put your devices away, such as during meals, social activities or before bed.
2. **Reduce notifications:** Turn off unnecessary notifications or vibration alerts. If available, use built-in screen time settings such as “Do Not Disturb” to reduce alerts.
3. **Take control of your apps:** Consider removing apps that encourage excessive checking or setting limits on how much time you spend using them.
4. **Protect your sleep:** Avoid using devices in the bedroom at night and create a routine that allows you to disconnect before bed.
5. **Be present:** During conversations and quality time with others, put your device aside and give them your full attention.
6. **Try screen-free activities:** Read a book, exercise, cook, journal, or spend time with family or friends.

The goal is to develop a balanced relationship with technology and ensure that it serves your needs rather than controlling your time and attention.