- Screen time

Be aware of your teen's screen habits, they could be doomscrolling

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Most parents are concerned about their children's screen habits. From endless scrolling on phones to binge-watching content, teens can easily slip into screen addiction. But there's more to worry about. A recent study found that teens who spend more than two hours a day on screens during weekdays are at a higher risk of developing anxiety and behavioural issues.



Interestingly, the study revealed that it wasn't just the amount of screen time that influenced anxiety levels. What mattered more was how they were using their screens.

Findings of the study:

The study, published in Computers in Human Behavior, analysed 580 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17. Researchers found that passive social media use, such as mindless scrolling and consuming content without interaction, had a stronger link to mental health issues than other types of screen activities.

What is doomscrolling?

Doomscrolling, the habit of passively consuming content by endlessly scrolling through social media, has emerged as a significant contributor to anxiety among teens. Researchers noted that this behaviour negatively impacts adolescent mental health by encouraging harmful social comparisons and reinforcing feelings of low self-esteem, inadequacy, envy, anxiety, and depression. The constant exposure to curated, often idealised content can distort reality and leave teens feeling not good enough.

Emma Duerden, who led the study, said, "We've shown some teens reporting 15 hours of screen time a day. But reducing cell phone use is easier said than done. Cell phone bans in schools are key. Being part of the real world is also important. We all need to take a break from our phones for our overall well-being."