



How can social media affect mental health?

A study asked teenagers in Year 9 how often they checked their social-media accounts on Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter each day.

More than half of the girls asked and 43% of the boys used social media more than three times times a day.

Those numbers get bigger as kids get older, rising to 69% of boys and 75% of girls by Year 11.

The research found that boys and girls who checked their social-media more than three times a day had worse mental health.

The study also found girls were particularly to be upset by cyber-bullying as they get older.

Dr D Nicholls, from Imperial College London, worked on the study and says

"In cyber-bullying, even your bed is not a safe place. If your phone is downstairs, you can't be bullied in your bed."

Dr Nicholls added that social media isn't always bad, but it can stop you doing other important things like exercise and sleep.

"It's not the amount of social media... it's when it replaces real life contact and activities.

"It's about getting a balance."

Adapted from BBC Newsround.

Answer the questions: True or False

The study found that more girls (than boys) checked social media more than three times a day. T/F

Older children check social media less often. T/F

Checking social media more than three times a day makes mental health worse. T/F

In general, boys are more upset by cyber-bullying. T/F

Dr Nicholls thinks that there is nothing good about social media. T/F

She thinks that social media is OK if we remember to exercise and sleep well. T/F

What do you think?

How often do you check social media?

Does it make you feel better or worse? Why?

Do you stay online too long? How long?

When you check social media late at night, do you sleep less?

How much sleep and exercise do you get? Is it enough?

September 5th is Digital detox day. People don't use their phones, TVs, tablets, computers and games consoles for one day. What do you think about this idea?