



Potential Benefits

- **Social Connection:** Teens can talk with friends and family online.
- **Identity, Self-Expression, and Self-Affirmation:** Teens can share their hobbies and activities through texts, videos, and pictures, which can help them learn more about who they are.
- **Community Support for Young People's Identities:** Social media can be used as a safe space to gain social support, learn through each other's stories and find validation through shared experiences.
- **Interest-Driven Exploration:** Teens, as they develop more independence, can pursue new ideas and hobbies online or follow educational, health-related, or inspirational accounts.
- **Empowerment and Civic Engagement:** Teens can use social media to learn more about causes they care about, engage in activism and connect with communities on and offline.
- **Fun and Entertainment:** Whether watching funny videos, playing online games or keeping up with music and pop culture, social media can help teens relax and have fun.



Potential Risks

- **Cyberbullying:** Teens may experience or witness bullying or hurtful behavior online.
- **Body Image and Disordered Eating:** Social comparison is common, especially on image-based platforms. Image-altering filters and profiles that focus on disordered eating or 'thinspiration' can lead to negative self-esteem and impact how teens think about their appearance.
- **Harmful Content:** Despite platforms' best efforts to prevent it, harmful content like pornography, child sexual abuse material, self-harm depictions, violence, or accounts selling illegal substances can be found on social media.
- **Unwanted Contact:** Teens may receive unwanted contact from strangers or from companies trying to sell them things.
- **Sleep:** Sleep is essential and can be negatively impacted when teens postpone bedtime so that they can continue to use social media for entertainment or feel pressure to be responsive to friends. The use of mobile devices during bedtime can make it harder to fall asleep and to get deep, restorative sleep that teens need.
- **Digital Stress:** Constant access to a wide array of social content designed to keep teens online as long as possible can lead to digital stress, which is a feeling of being overwhelmed or stressed out (NO) when away from their device, or struggle against expectations to always be available.