

## The side effects of social media.



### Play it safe while staying social.

Social media has changed the way we interact with people and the world. But as exciting as these new connections can be, they can also be harmful to our health. Indulging in too much screen time, playing the comparison game with other people's online world and focusing on too many negative comments all play a part.

Left unchecked, social media can lead to habits that negatively affect your mental and physical well-being. But a combination of having a more grounded mindset and following smarter practices can help you become a safer, healthier social media user.

### Follow these tips for making a healthier connection with social media.



#### Know your goal.

Determine why you want to use social media. If it's to keep up to date on community events, use it just for that. If you want to stay caught up on national news, maybe a once-a-day check-in is enough. It's easy to stay on longer than intended though, so just be mindful while you're on any platform.\*



#### Think about how it makes you feel.

Does seeing what friends are sharing make you feel happy or envious? When you recognize how content on social media affects you, you can decide if you need to change how you use it.\*



#### Control what you see.

Keep only important alerts on, consider minimizing pop-up notifications, and unfollow accounts that may trigger negative emotions and reactions.\*\*



#### Set a time to step away.

Plan social media – free breaks throughout your day. For example, avoid using social media when you first wake up or right before bedtime. Read a book, get outside, work on a puzzle or call a friend. Just make sure it's something that takes you away from the screen and is worth your time.\*



#### Follow feel-good stuff.

Balance heavy news by focusing on things that make you happy. Follow accounts that focus on your interests or “good news” created to make you smile or boost your mood.\*

\*Healthwise. “Tips for Using News and Social Media in a Healthy Way.” <https://www.healthwise.net/intracorp/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=ac13156>. Page last updated June 16, 2021.

\*\*Smith, L. “How to Keep Your Social Media In Check.” WebMD. <https://www.webmd.com/balance/features/how-to-keep-your-social-media-in-check>. Page last updated August 11, 2021.