Keep kids safe online

With schools closed and lockdowns imposed, many children and young people are spending more time online doing schoolwork, playing games, and socializing with friends. However, more time spent on the internet and social media can make children more vulnerable to cyberbullying, sexual predators and other forms of online harm. These risks can come not just from strangers but people they may already know on or offline, making monitoring online use vital. Here are some tips to keep your kids safe online.

Set and agree on screen time rules for time spent on homework, chatting with friends and playing games. A “no devices at dinner” or at certain other times can be a healthy rule to implement.

Talk to your child about how to make safe choices about who they talk to online, and not sharing passwords, suggestive pictures or other private information.

Tell them that you’re available to listen if they are worried about anything they experience online. Together, you might also identify trusted adults or peers they can talk to about a risky online encounter.

Teach respectful communication, and how their words and actions can affect others.

Use online safety tools. Use the Safe Search option on browsers, parental controls on Facebook, and tools to keep them safe on different social media accounts they may use such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat.

Ensure your child’s devices have the latest software updates and anti-virus programs, and the privacy settings are set on high. Remind your kids to cover the camera on the computer when they aren’t actively using it.

If you are concerned about your child’s health and safety online, talk to your healthcare practitioner or a licensed professional counselor for guidance.

For more information, visit: https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/protecting-kids-online

Working out safely outdoors

During the spring months, you’re likely to be more enthusiastic about going outside to do fun healthy activities. Unfortunately, many of the activities you may normally partake in may be off limits due to the pandemic, but that doesn’t mean that you still can’t enjoy some outdoor exercises. Walking, running, swimming, biking and hiking (if local beaches and trails aren’t off limits) are all activities that you may still be able to enjoy. Keep these safety tips in mind while working out outdoors.

• If appropriate for your activity, wear a mask, fabric face covering or bandana to keep your respiratory droplets to yourself and avoid those of others.

• Maintain social distancing guidelines. While there is no definitive answer as to how far to stay away from others when working out outside, for your safety and the safety of others, it is best to give a wide berth, much greater than 6 feet.

• Go at off times, in places that aren’t as popular. Try to go when and where you expect the least amount of people are out. Be sure to let someone know when you’re headed out and where you are in case of emergency! This is especially important if you’re swimming.

• Stay in your own outdoor space. Walk or run around your yard or in place on your balcony. If you’re a cyclist, find a stand to turn your bike into a stationary bike.

Remember, as the days get warmer, it becomes increasingly important to stay hydrated and keep your body cool. Also, don’t forget the sunscreen!
**Overcome Burnout**

Snapping at others? Does every day feel like an uphill trudge? These are classic signs of burnout—the exhaustion, frustration and lack of motivation you feel from ongoing stress when there are too many demands on your attention and too few resources to deal with it. If it’s not addressed, burnout can harm your health, happiness, relationships and job performance. The good news is that you can make changes to restore the balance you need. **Try these tips when you are feeling stretched thin:**

**Reset your priorities.** Saying “no” to non-essential tasks frees up time for more restorative activities, like leisurely exploring a nearby trail.

**Request support.** At work, you could ask for a flexible work schedule or swap certain aspects of your job with a coworker. At home, make a family calendar clearly listing everyone’s daily chores so they don’t all automatically fall on you!

**Recharge your batteries.** Make space for those activities and people that boost, rather than drain, your spirits. Take short breaks throughout the day to just sit quietly or step outside—even a few minutes in nature can be invigorating. Sign up to learn something new—mastering a skill can reignite your confidence and your outlook.

**Know when to seek additional help.** Accepting that you cannot always deal with a stressful situation on your own is critical to resilience.

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**National Safety Month**

As the weather warms up and you head outdoors more often, in addition to heeding social distancing and other health recommendations, follow tips to stay safe, provided by the National Safety Council.

Find out more: [https://bit.ly/2WEw4Oq](https://bit.ly/2WEw4Oq)

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