

MORE ONLINE TIME

USE THESE IMPORTANT TIPS

Each day, more and more kids are staying home from school or are not able to participate in after school activities and sports. Inevitably with this new reality comes increased internet use by children and young people, as parents struggle to occupy them.

And of course, increased screen time increases risks.

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS AND IDEAS while we navigate this unprecedented time.

- 1 Hackers and predators are out in force, knowing internet traffic is skyrocketing.** Never open a link, Facebook post, email or message without knowing the sender. Imitating government and health authorities are some of the lows these people will stoop to, exploiting our desire for information and clarity at this time.
- 2 Re-iterate with your children the dangers of chatting to strangers and how you can never be sure who is behind the keyboard on the other end, or what their intentions are.** Predators will sometimes use seemingly innocent conversation starters, will try to build a rapport by either pretending to be the same age or interested in what the victim is. Their end goal is all they care about, nothing else.
- 3 Set up ergonomic (as best you can) stations where you and the kids can work from.** Create (albeit temporary) spaces that are free from unnecessary clutter, and are designated for only screen / internet use. Use external keyboards, mice and comfortable chairs and try to raise screens to head height.
- 4 Try to (as much as possible) keep the same internet safety precautions you used before the virus hit.** Don't allow devices in the bedroom and try to keep devices where you can see them, preferably in a common room of the house. Limit screen time and check apps and games before they are allowed and downloaded. Set up the right parental controls and restrictions on all internet enabled devices, gaming consoles, and your wifi router. You can also download apps that monitor and restrict your child's internet use.
- 5 Be mindful of false information circulating the internet.** There are many people claiming to be experts, so only rely on reputable sources like government or school announcements.
- 6 Set a good example and try to have a balanced life away from the internet.** Too much social media or news can make families anxious and panicky. Where possible, get some fresh air outside, re-connect with the family with board games or family nights. Getting away from all the bad news can help you stay calm, which will spill over to your children.