



## David Fairlamb

# THE FIT FACTOR

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### LIFESTYLE CHANGE

If your child is constantly tired, moody and lethargic due to late nights online, look to take action by limiting wifi and monitoring their late-night food intake.

### FITNESS TIP

Encourage your children to take in some fresh air rather than sitting in front of a screen this Easter holiday. Sometimes they need that push to realise what they are missing, this clears their mind and gives them a real feel-good endorphin rush.

**T**HE impact of social media, late nights, and unhealthy snacks can be significant on schoolchildren. These habits can affect children's physical and mental health, academic performance, and overall wellbeing.

I believe social media has a far greater impact on all our lives and we need to try to monitor and help our children where possible.

Spending too much time on gadgets also means reduced physical activity and had been linked to a rise in obesity, as well as lower self-esteem and poor social skills. Studies also indicate excess screen time can cause physical eye and body strain, sleep deprivation, and impaired cognitive abilities.

#### Social media

Social media has become a pervasive part of modern life, and children are spending more and more time on these platforms. While social media can be an excellent way of connecting with friends and sharing information, it can also have negative effects on children's mental health.

Research shows that children who spend more time on social media are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

#### Late nights

Many children are not getting enough sleep. Lack of sleep can affect children's physical and mental health, including their ability to learn and perform well in school.

Children who do not get enough sleep are more likely to experience mood swings, irritability, and difficulty concentrating. Additionally, lack of sleep can weaken the immune system, making children more susceptible to illness.

#### Unhealthy snacks

Many children consume way too many unhealthy, sugar laden snacks which over time can lead to weight gain and increase the risk of developing chronic health conditions such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Consuming too much sugar can cause energy crashes and affect children's ability to concentrate and perform well in school.

I believe many children leave home in the morning having already consumed more sugar than their recommended daily allowance.

#### Tips for parents

Parents can help their children develop better habits by encouraging healthy behaviours and setting limits on social media, late nights, and unhealthy snacks.

#### MY TIPS

##### Encourage healthy eating habits

Provide your children with a variety of healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Limit unhealthy snacks and sugar laden drinks, instead try to provide healthier alternatives such as water and low-fat milk.

##### Establish a consistent sleep schedule

Set a regular bedtime and wake-up time for your children and encourage them to stick to it. Avoid allowing your children to stay up too late on weekends or during holidays, as this will disrupt their sleep cycle.



ing games with their friends online. In order to stay awake, they turn to eating unhealthy food – fighting tiredness the next day, they turn to sugar to stay awake and here the cycle begins.

#### Set limits on screen time

Establish rules for screen time and limit the amount of time your children spend on social media and other devices. Encourage your children to exercise and other hobbies that promote healthy behaviours.

#### Be a role model

Set a good example for your children, by engaging in healthy behaviours yourself. This includes eating healthy foods, limiting screen time, and exercising. Knowing how to help your children is one thing, but in order to make a difference you need to take action.

If you are looking to make a positive change to help your children's lifestyle Easter holidays is a good time to start establishing some new habits, they will thank you in the long term.

Many children are consistently losing sleep due to late nights in fear of missing out on social media activities or because they are play-