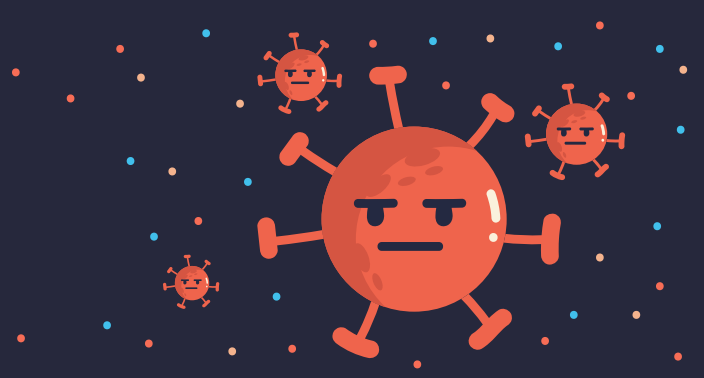


FOR PARENTS

KEEPING KIDS SAFE ONLINE DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC



The COVID 19 lockdown has forced families to be together for a few weeks and everyone is at risk of stress due to the exceptional circumstances. In addition to their own concerns, parents can be particularly stressed by children who are bored and anxious due to being confined at home, not able to go out to play or to meet friends. However, the current situation also offers families an opportunity to spend time together and support each other, especially to harness the benefits of these devices and to minimise the risks and threats now and later once the lockdown is lifted.

Digital technologies and the internet may be considered a boon during physical isolation as they have facilitated transmission of information, social interactions, and entertainment for everyone and to a lesser degree distance education for children. While it is natural for people confined to their homes to be drawn to internet-enabled digital devices during this phase, excessive usage now may make the transition back into schedules very difficult.

Keep these pro tips in mind to make the most of the internet, while maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline.

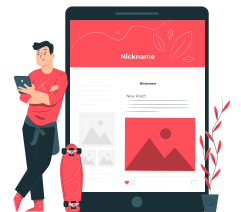
FOR CHILDREN AGED 6 - 11:

Accounts for children: It is advisable that you create a separate profile/account on devices and platforms for your children. This will help keep a track of their online activities, and also keep them safe from inappropriate content.



YouTube Kids: Instead of browsing videos on YouTube, use YouTube Kids, which shows only curated age appropriate content. You can use the app or even the desktop version.

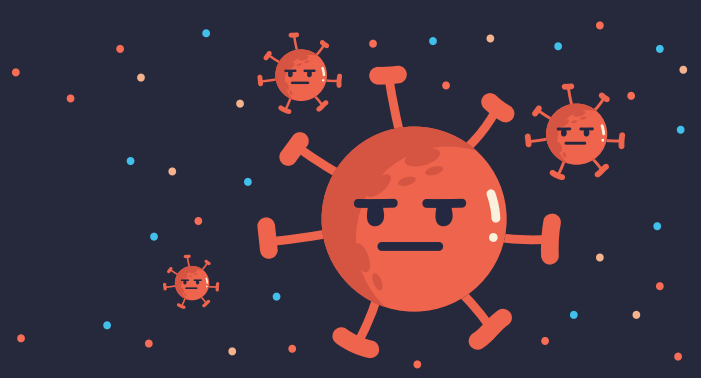
Managing Screen Time: To keep a check on screen time, you can use in-built features on your devices as well as apps. You can also create a family agreement, and chart out terms like no devices at the dinner table, or no games for more than one hours, as agreeable to all.



Technology for Good: Learn about a new app or website together that will benefit all members of the family. This will help reinforce the idea of using technology productively, and not just for entertainment.

Building Trust: Engage in conversations with your child to understand what they do online. Building confidence and trust will help foster an environment, where they feel comfortable sharing their experiences, both good and bad.





FOR CHILDREN AGED 12 - 17:

Know the Rules: If your child uses any social media platform, sit together with them and go through the community standards/guidelines of the platform. This will help them understand what content and behaviour is allowed on a platform and what is not. Encourage them to report anything that they may find inappropriate.



Stranger Danger: Remind your child about not accepting friend requests from people they may not know but have friends in common with. Also discuss that sometimes people are not always who they say they are online.

Online Threats: Talk about risks that they may face online, like grooming, bullying, stalking, etc. Children are often unaware of behaviour that may be wrong, let alone illegal. Sensitization will help the child understand when to say no and what they should report.



Bonding Activities: Watch movies, sports, news, web-series or gaming together as a family as a stress buster and an enjoyable bonding experience. But it may also be a good time for parents to recall and share almost lost traditions of storytelling, songs, word games or indoor games with children, who may be able to help them build their technological skills.

Family Agreements: Work on "family agreements" based on negotiation on the time to be spent on entertainment (such as online games, watching movies, web series), advancing knowledge (revising school work, researching projects, acquiring new skills) and doing basic exercises (including exercises to prevent physical problems associated with excessive use of digital devices).

