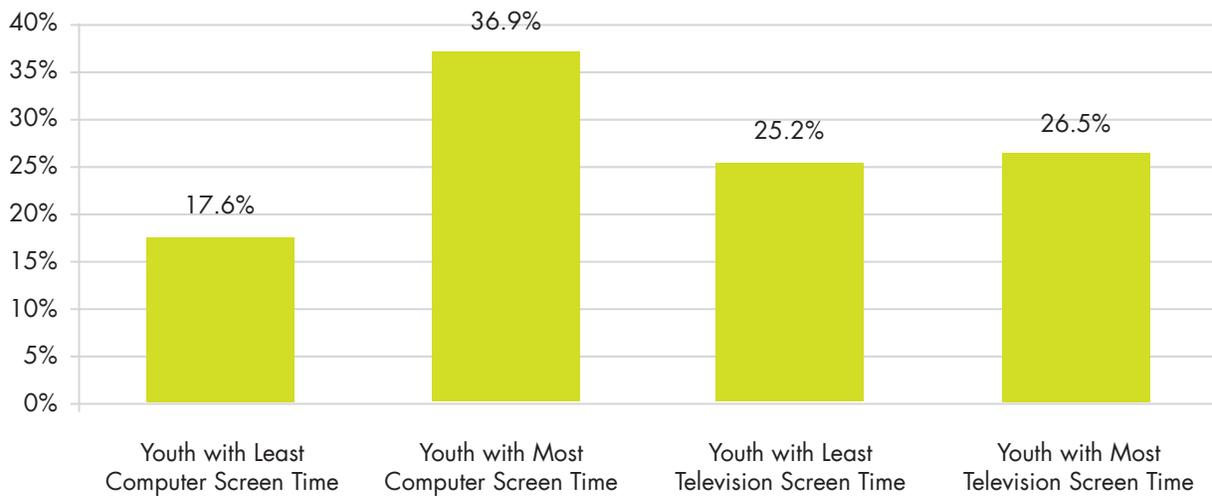




## Excessive Screen Time Linked to Engagement in Risk Behaviors

Researchers have found that long hours of computer use among youth are associated with a 50% increase in engagement in multiple risk behaviors (MRB), such as smoking, alcohol and illicit drug use, not using seat belts, and unprotected sex, according to a new report in *Preventive Medicine*. Among ninth- and tenth-grade youth who reported frequently<sup>1</sup> engaging in MRB, the prevalence of engagement for those with the least computer screen time<sup>2</sup> was 17.6%, compared to 36.9% among those with the most. Modest increases in engagement in MRB were also associated with high television use (25.2% among those with the least television screen time compared to 26.5% among those with the most). Research has shown that engagement in risk behaviors has consequences on adolescent health, and the authors recommend limiting youth’s computer screen time and reevaluating national standards based on further research.

**Prevalence of Engagement in MRB among Ninth- and Tenth-Graders Reporting Frequent Screen Time, 2006**



**Source:** Carson, V., Pickett, W., and Janssen, I. (2011). Screen Time and Risk Behaviors in 10- to 16-year-old Canadian Youth. *Preventive Medicine*, 52: 99-103.

**Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Participants were asked a series of questions about engagement in MRB. Responses were assigned point values and summed to create overall MRB scores, which were then categorized into groups reflecting the frequency of engagement: never, occasional, and frequent.
- <sup>2</sup> The study population was divided into four equal groups along the measure of screen time. The group with the least screen time represents the lowest 25% of the study population, and the group with the most screen time represents the highest 25%.

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