

The Facts

- **72% of Americans** use some type of social media to connect with one another, engage with news content, share information and entertain themselves.¹
- **95% of US teens** ages 13 - 17 now report they have a smartphone or access to one.
- Almost half of teens (**45%**) now say they are **online on a near-constant basis**.¹
- YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat are the most popular apps amongst teens with **85%**, **72%**, and **69%**, reporting using those social media platforms, respectively.¹
- When asked which platforms they use **most often**, **35% chose Snapchat**, **32% chose YouTube**, and **15% chose Instagram**.¹
- Only 51% of teens reported using **Facebook** at all with 10% saying they use it most often.¹
- **54%** of teens report that if parents knew what actually happened on social media, they'd be a lot more worried about it.²

Why It Matters

Social media is not used only as a space for interaction. **Teens rely on social media in the same way telephone calls or e-mail used to reign.**



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FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY



Benefits of Social Media

- Social networks offer a place to “hang out” and can help increase social skills.³
- Allows users to maintain contact with others not directly in their social circle; such as teens who do not attend their school, camp friends, teammates, family members, etc.³
- Teens can explore profiles of groups of people with diverse points of view.³
- Apps can inspire creativity, introduce new brands or companies, and promote a feeling of “community”.³
- Teens report that they understand their friends’ feelings and feel more connected to them.⁴
- Teens who interact online more frequently have a greater and more clear understanding of who they are.⁴

31% of teens reported that social media has had a mostly positive effect on people their age citing connection with

family/friends, easier access to news and information, meeting others with same interests, entertainment, self-expression, support, and education amongst their reasons.¹

According to an American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) study, research confirms that by increasing the chances that teens can connect with like-minded peers, social media may help them feel less lonely and more confident.⁴

Sources

1. Pew Research Center
2. Common Sense Media Survey
3. Center City Pediatrics
4. AAP PEDIATRICS® Journal
5. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Disadvantages of Social Media

Cyberbullying

- 1 in 4 teens reported online “drama” or cyberbullying.⁴
- Girls are report being harassed online 3 times as often as boys.⁵
- Among middle and high school students, 21% of girls say they have been bullied online or by text messages, compared with less than 7% of boys.⁵
- Girls are more likely to be targets of online rumor-spreading and receive unsolicited, explicit images.¹

Emotional Wellness

- Frequent use on devices may result in changing sleep cycles for adolescents, which may contribute to depression.⁴
- Negative implications around issues such as self-esteem, gender stereotypes, body standards, and self-objectification; especially for females.⁴
- Emphasis on the validation from peers can encourage teens to share private information or engage in high-risk behavior.⁴
- One study found that 54% of 18 year olds’ public social media profiles contained or referenced high-risk behavior, such as sexual activity, substance abuse, or violence.⁴

Personal Data Usage

- Social media channels are owned by for-profit companies that can collect and sell data based on online activity.⁴
- Data can be used for direct advertisements for alcohol, sexual content, and other age-appropriate interests.⁴

Stay Social Media Safe³

Tips for Teens

- **Never agree to meet someone in person that you “meet” online.**
- Making privacy settings high so that **only your friends can see posts.**
- **Be selective** about who you accept as a friend. This helps to avoid spam bots or fake profiles that might lead to cyber bullying.
- **If someone sends anything inappropriate or provocative, tell an adult immediately.**
- **Password protect** everything.
- **Don’t post anything your parents, siblings, or friends couldn’t see.**

Tips for Parents

- **“Friend” your child** and check in on their profile(s) periodically. If you choose not to, you might consider sitting with them and having them show you their profile(s) on a regular basis.
- **Talk to them about what they are doing when they are online.** Ask what their favorite websites are and what they do when they are on the site. For example, are they posting pictures and chatting? And if so, with whom?
- Recommend that **laptops and tablets are to be used in family spaces.** A quick glance at their screen and your child’s knowledge that family is around can be a good reminder for teens to stay safe.
- **Set time limits for daily use,** including a place for devices before bed. Using late at night can make it difficult to wind down and go to sleep. A depressed mood and/or anxiety can also be heightened when there is not a break.
- Remind them that **“what goes on the internet, stays on the internet”.** This may be a difficult concept for teens to grasp. However, it is helpful for them to understand that everything they post may remain there or be re-sent by someone else.