

Books Are Good Medicine

Suggestions For Young Adults, 13-up:

Electronic media is everywhere: TV, videos, Internet. Parents and teens often wonder (and argue about), "How much is healthy?" **Here's what we know:**

- * "Boredom" is not a disease. Quite the contrary, it inspires people to harness their imagination and create their own fun – including diving into a good book.
- * Passive media is pre-defined, requiring limited imagination or effort. Activities like conversation, exercise, or reading are **unique**, defined by the individual.
- * Passive media is **addictive**. Consistent, enforced limits are very important.
- * Inappropriate and excessive media exposure are associated with obesity, poor sleep quality, antisocial behavior, body image issues, substance abuse, behavioral problems including ADHD, and under-achievement in school.
- * Kids who read consistently – **at least 20 minutes per day**, for fun not homework – tend to read and write better, with improved academics, attention span, imagination, and communication skills. Books – the original text message!

"Prescriptions" That Are Kind of New:



The Hunger Games – Suzanne Collins.
A 16 y/o girl, 12 districts, and reality TV to the death.



Just Listen – Sarah Dessen.
14 y/o Annabel learns hard lessons about popularity.



Paper Towns – John Green.
Crush-fueled adventure between a boy and a mystery.

And a Healthy Dose Tried And True:



The Giver – Lois Lowry.
A 12 y/o becomes disillusioned with her perfect society.



The House of the Scorpion – Nancy Farmer.
A futuristic, chilling thrill ride exploring human identity.



Stargirl – Jerry Spinelli.
An eccentric girl challenges the code of "fit in or else."



Speak – Laurie Halse Anderson.
A girl becomes a teen outcast for telling the truth.



Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy – Douglas Adams.
A classic, comedic romp through the Universe.

American Academy of Pediatrics Media Use Guidelines:

* **Discourage ANY television/video viewing for children younger than 2 years, and encourage activities that promote proper brain development, such as talking, playing, singing, and reading together.**

* **Older children should have a limit on entertainment media time of 1-2 hours of quality educational programming per day.**

* **At any age, watching together is best. Parents should be good role models and limit their own viewing.**

* **Children's bedrooms should be "electronic media-free zones," with no TV, computer, or game systems.**

* **Media-reduction strategies include not watching while eating or doing homework, and encouraging fun activities like reading, puzzles, art projects, or playing outdoors.**

* **More information: www.AAP.org**