

Health Reports, October 2023

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The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical activity and screen time differs across age groups

Lockdowns and closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic reduced opportunities to participate in many forms of organized sport and recreation. Stay-at-home orders caused a shift to remote work and school and an increased reliance on screens. To better understand these effects, two new articles released today in *Health Reports* compare physical activity and screen time between the pre-pandemic (January to December 2018, January to March 2020) and pandemic (September to December 2020, January 2021 to February 2022) periods.

The article "[The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical activity and screen time among Canadian youth](#)" found that physical activity declined among youth during the first year of the pandemic and has since rebounded in boys but not girls. The article "[The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical activity and screen time among Canadian adults](#)" found that younger adults have maintained their pre-pandemic level of physical activity through 2021 and early 2022, while older adults have become more active.

Screen time increased among youth and adults during the pandemic. Many Canadians shifted from the lowest category of screen time (less than two hours per day) to accumulating more than four hours of screen time per day. This shift may reflect the dependence on screens for work, schooling and socializing during the pandemic. It is unknown whether screen time will revert to pre-pandemic levels or whether this increase will be sustained in the long term.

Physical activity is a key determinant of health and was shown to promote well-being during the pandemic. The new findings suggest that teenage girls may require additional support to re-engage in sports and physical activity and that older adults have been particularly resilient to the pandemic-related challenges when it comes to healthy active living.

The articles "[The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical activity and screen time among Canadian youth](#)" and "[The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical activity and screen time among Canadian adults](#)" are now available in the October 2023 online issue of *Health Reports*, Vol. 34, No. 10 ([82-003-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).

