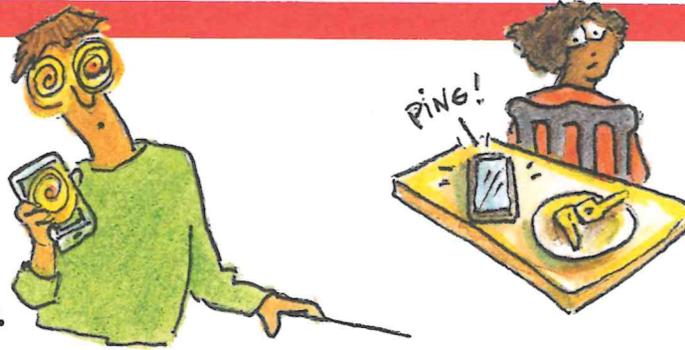


**Social media can be a great way to stay in touch with friends, find information, entertainment or news. However, researchers have found that social media use can also have negative impacts on your mental health. Here is what you need to know.**

## Social media use is designed to be habit-forming.

- Social media companies use notifications, a bottomless news feed and other tools to keep you coming back.
- When you find content that you like, your brain responds by sending out a feel-good chemical called dopamine.
- This chemical response can help to keep you hooked on social media.



## Social media use can affect your mental health.

Regular or prolonged use may increase

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Poor body image and disordered eating
- Distraction from important things like work, school, exercise, or relationships with friends and family
- Comparing yourself to others
- Sleep problems
- Exposure to bullying, verbal abuse and inappropriate content
- Risky behaviors such as self-harm

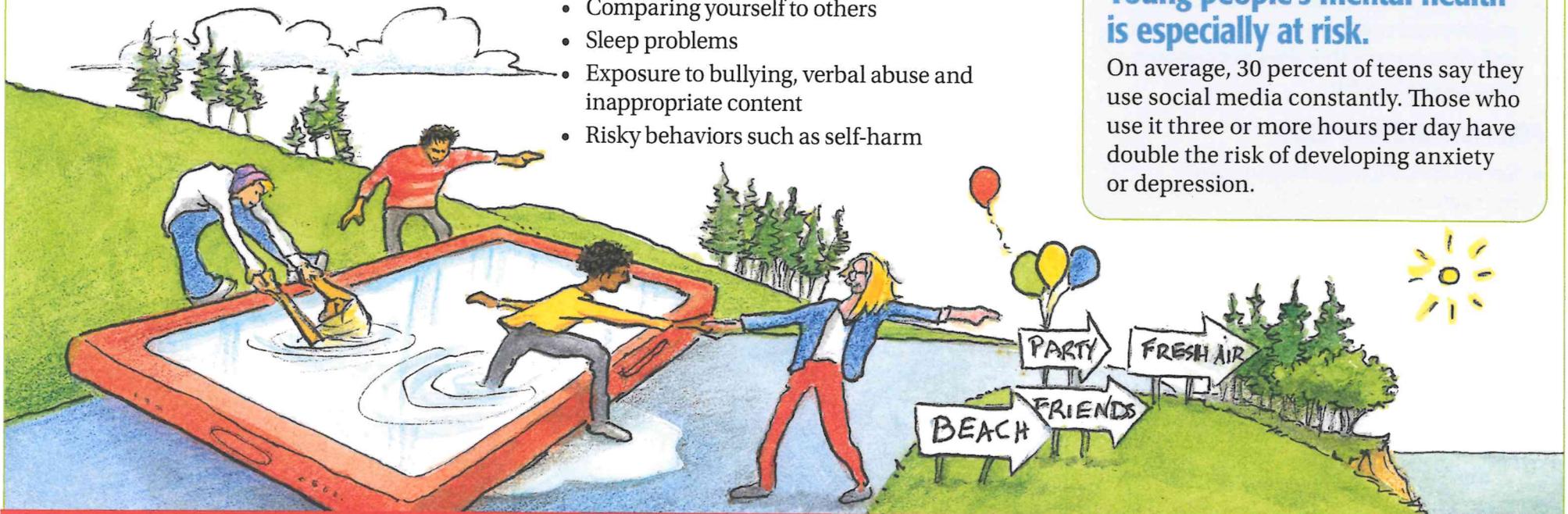
## Is social media use harming your mental health?

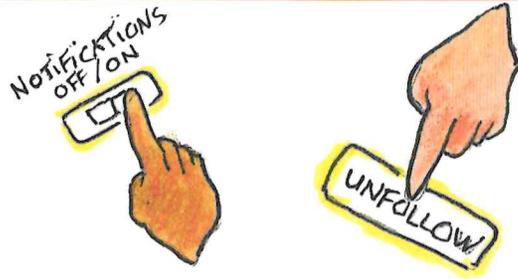
Signs include

- Losing interest in self-care, relationships and regular activities.
- Using social media instead of getting enough sleep.
- Not being able to stop scrolling, even when you want to.
- Feeling more anxious, depressed or lonely after using social media.
- Engaging in risky behaviors or outrageous photos to gain likes and comments.
- Having thoughts of harming yourself after viewing certain content on social media.

## Young people's mental health is especially at risk.

On average, 30 percent of teens say they use social media constantly. Those who use it three or more hours per day have double the risk of developing anxiety or depression.





## Tips to improve social media habits

### FOR EVERYONE—

- Turn your phone off at certain times of day.
- Charge your phone away from your bedroom overnight.
- Turn notifications off.
- Make an extra effort to plan real-life activities with your friends and family.
- Curate your social media feed. Follow positive and uplifting accounts. Avoid or unfollow content that does not support your mental health.

### FOR FAMILIES AND KIDS—

- Create specific times for in-person interactions.
- Talk about content. Teach kids to question what they are seeing, especially when it comes to posts that spread hate.
- Teach kids to pay attention to how their social media use makes them feel.
- Make sure that kids know how to report cyberbullying and abuse.

Social media can help keep you connected with friends and family and informed about the world. But unchecked, it can increase mental health challenges. Look inside to learn how social media use can affect your mental health, and how to use it in healthier ways.

This pamphlet is not a substitute for medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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# Social Media & Your Mental Health

