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# ***HEALTH TO MEET YOU***

**Screen Use dimension:**

## **10 Harmful Side Effects Of Mobile Phones On Teenagers**

Over and wrong use of cell phones can damage not only mental but also physical health.

Parents may consider giving their teenagers mobile phones for security purposes. However, the possible misuse and other side effects of mobile phones on teenagers are not unknown. While it does serve the purpose of being aware of your child's whereabouts, it is important to consider its adverse effects on teens. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, about 78% of all teens between ages 12 and 17 have mobile phones (1). It is a common sight these days to see a group of teens standing together but having no conversation and being involved in themselves. Teenagers use their mobile phones to call their parents and do other good and bad things. About one in four teenagers have access to the internet, far more than adults. Scroll through the post to know whether or not cell phones are good for teens, the negative impacts of cell phones, and tips on safe usage of mobile phones.

### **Effects Of Mobile Phones On Teenagers**

There is no doubt that a mobile phone is a handy tool. It eases communication with colleagues, friends, and relatives. But every technology that provides such benefits comes with a set of negative impacts. The impact of mobile phones on youth and society is immense. It is this area that requires attention when you are giving your teen a cell phone. Here's how cell phones affect teenagers.

#### **1. Teen tendonitis (TTT)**

Excess messaging can lead to Teen Tendonitis (TTT). It causes pain in the hands, back, and neck due to poor posture. **According to a five-year cohort study, excessive cell phone usage is known to result in musculoskeletal disorders such as tendonitis and first carpometacarpal arthritis in the forearm and thumb**

## 2. Stress

Having a cell phone will tempt your teen to spend all day talking or texting instead of doing productive things. Studies have proven that teens who spend too much of their time with their cell phones are more prone to stress, anxiety, and depression. **Research has also found that excessive use of smartphones may result in an increased risk of mental health problems**

## 3. Sleep loss

Most teens keep their cell phones nearby while sleeping to respond to texts and calls and remain reachable around the clock. This may lead to sleep interruption and disruption. Studies have found that teenagers who use cellphones after the lights out experienced increased tiredness. Also, college students who use cell phones after the onset of sleep are reported to be awake an extra 46 minutes per week

## 4. Accidents

Teens tend to attend calls and text while driving, which is proven to be dangerous. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), teens are more likely to be distracted than drivers of any other age. So, using a cell phone while driving should be a strict no.

## 5. Anxiety

Relying on texting as a primary mode of communication can increase anxiety in teens. Texting is instantly gratifying, but it also produces anxiety. The instant reply by a friend can bring joy and elation. But in case of delayed response or no response, this same pleasure can turn into disappointment. Also, cell phone addiction can turn into an obsession to check messages and reply immediately. It may also increase anxiety by creating an illusion that they had received a message even when there was no message, making them frequently check their phones.

## 6. Risk of cancer

Although there's no clear evidence of the relationship between cell phone use and cancer, there are some statistically significant associations in some people. Data collected from five European countries have shown an

increased risk of acoustic neuroma in those who used a cell phone for ten or more years

## 7. Cyberbullying

According to a study conducted on 13–18-year-olds by Cox Communications, 15% of children had been cyberbullied online, 10% had been cyberbullied by cell phone, and 5% had cyberbullied another person through a cell phone.

## 8. False prestige

The latest developments in cell phones have made it easy for teenagers to access any information. Most of the things projected on social media and the Internet may not be accurate, but teenagers who are naive (at their age) might take them seriously and get influenced. This might lead them to live in a fantasy world and develop false prestige. Some may also resort to crimes to fulfill their fantasies.

## 9. Obesity

Constant usage of cell phones may also cause obesity in teenagers. According to a study conducted by Harvard T.H Chan School of Public Health, teens who spend more hours a day on cell phones are more likely to become obese. The study further says that teens who spend more than five hours a day in front of screens are 43% more likely to get less sleep or exercise, resulting in obesity

## 10. Vision problems

Increased use of cell phones is said to cause vision problems in teenagers. As per a study conducted on 30 medical students, 83% of them were found to have cell phone vision syndrome. The symptoms include stress, redness, burning sensation, blurred vision, and dry eyes

## Conclusion:

Cell phones are not going anywhere, at least not anytime soon. So, you need to teach your teens about mobile phone safety and how to use it responsibly. They also need to have agreed boundaries for mobile phone usage. Here are some ways to avoid the adverse effects of cellphones on teenagers:

1. Negotiate with your teen on what should be the acceptable amount of time and money spent on cell phones.
2. Tell them to curb their impulse of replying to texts instantly.
3. Ask them to turn off their cell phone while driving.
4. Ask them to turn off their cellphone before going off to sleep to maintain a regular sleep schedule.
5. Teach your teen that short to moderate conversations on cell phones might help in decreasing the ill effects to some extent. Encourage them to limit conversations to not more than 20 minutes a day.
6. Encourage installation of apps, which track daily phone use. This enables the user to keep a track of actual phone usage per day.
7. Opt for a monthly plan that gives a structure for how many call minutes and text messages are available. If you are paying the bill, you can also have access to the mobile phone records, which will help you track how often your teen calls and sends messages and to which numbers.
8. Ensure you set a good example by limiting your cell phone usage, as children tend to imitate or learn things more from parents.
9. Establish a rule that the usage of cell phones is restricted at least one hour before sleep.
10. Also, make sure your teenager keeps their cell phone away during meals or family gatherings.
11. Ensure your children spend some time daily in physical activities such as running, playing, or walking. Encourage them to leave their cell phone behind while doing such activities.