Screens and the internet are an integral part of adolescents’ lives, whether for communication, entertainment, learning or information. While they have many advantages, they also have their downsides. Prolonged use, for example, can lead to eye or musculoskeletal problems, and the time spent in front of the screen can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle. Adolescents can be exposed to content that is not appropriate for their age or that puts them at risk (e.g. violence, pornography, cyber-bullying), and images of idealized bodies posted online can have an impact on their own body image. There is also a risk of losing control of the time spent on certain online activities, such as gaming and social media, with significant negative impacts on everyday life.

This factsheet presents a selection of results from the HBSC 2022 survey on online behaviour among 11-, 13- and 15-year-olds in Switzerland. In particular, it includes the first national results on problematic gaming behaviour.

Key figures 2022

- ~61% of boys and ~68% of girls aged 11 to 15 are on social media every day.
- ~32% of boys and ~8% of girls aged 11 to 15 game every day.
- ~17% of 11- to 15-year-olds communicate online almost all the time throughout the day (all people considered together).
- ~7% of 11- to 15-year-olds have a problematic social media use.
- ~45% of 11- to 15-year-olds used social media to escape from negative feelings.
- ~40% of 11- to 15-year-olds tried to spend less time on social media, but failed.
- ~3% of 14- and 15-year-olds who game have a problematic gaming behaviour.
- ~18% of 14- and 15-year-olds who game do it often to relieve a negative mood.

Entertainment, communication and learning

In 2022, ~82% of 11- to 15-year-olds were online every day (B: ~81%; G: ~84%). ~65% used social media every day and ~48% listened to music/radio/podcasts every day. ~20% gamed daily, ~20% streamed films/series every day and ~10% used the Internet to do homework every day.

Going on social daily every day and listening to music/radio/podcasts every day are more common among girls, while gaming every day is more common among boys.

The frequency of being online increases between the 11-year-olds and the 15-year-olds. This is the case for these online services except for gaming.

With whom do 11- to 15-year-olds communicate online almost all the time throughout the day? (HBSC 2022)?

1 This means intensive use whenever it is possible.
In the HBSC study, **problematic use** is defined as a loss of control over the time invested in gaming or using social media, with a significant negative impact on relationships with close friends and family and on essential everyday activities. Problematic use can sometimes lead to addiction. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) includes the diagnosis ‘gaming (addictive) disorder’ (but no specific diagnosis for social media). However, such a diagnosis cannot be made solely on the basis of the answers given by the students in this study.

### Gaming

In 2022, out of a list of ten signs that could indicate **problematic gaming behaviour**, ~3% of 14- and 15-year-old gamers had often experienced at least five of these signs in the previous 12 months and would therefore have a problematic gaming behaviour, with no difference according to sex/gender or age.

**Hierarchy of the 10 signs often experienced in the previous 12 months**

- Daydreams about gaming
- Puts school performance at risk
- Relieves a negative mood
- Prefer gaming over meeting friends
- Has guilt about gaming
- Game despite negative consequences
- Argue with other people
- Have serious conflicts
- Feel unhappy
- Try to spend less time gaming

### Social media

In 2022, out of a list of nine signs that could indicate **problematic social media use**, ~7% of 11- to 15-year-olds had experienced at least six in the last 12 months and have therefore a problematic use. This rate is higher compared to 2018 (~4%). Girls and 13- year-olds are most affected.

**Hierarchy of the 9 signs in the past 12 months**

- Argue with other people
- Have serious conflicts
- Feel unhappy
- Try to spend less time without success
- Need to game longer
- Feeledge
- Forget about negative feelings
- Lie to parents
- Think of nothing else

### Advice for adults

It is important to ensure a balance between online and offline leisure time, to set rules together with the adolescents for the time or moments during the day spent being online, to take one’s role models seriously and to encourage a positive and creative use of the Internet. As each child develops in a different way, content should be adapted to the age and stage of development. Adults should support children in primary school in their use of the Internet. During adolescence, they can gradually become more independent. It’s also important to be interested in their online activities and to talk about them, for example about what games are played, in-game purchases and by setting a small budget for the purchase of paid content in the form of a pre-paid payment card.

**More information:**
- Ecrans, en parler aux ados - Guide for parents by Addiction Switzerland (available in DE/FR/IT)
- Recommendations from Youth and Media for parents of 6- to 13-year-olds and of 12- to 18-year-olds
- Intervention guide APAN for professionals on media use (available in DE and FR)

### More Results


Statistical standard tables on the website www.hbsc.ch

Swiss monitoring system of addiction and NCD’s (MonAM: www.obsan.admin.ch/en/MonAM)

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### The method in short

The international study Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is conducted every four years under the aegis of the World Health Organisation (WHO-Europe). In Switzerland, the study has been conducted by Addiction Switzerland since 1986 and is funded by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) and most of the cantons.

It is a nationally representative monitoring study of health and health behaviours in adolescents aged 11 to 15. In 2022, 857 classes in 5th to 9th grades (7th to 11th year HarmoS) were randomly selected in Switzerland, and 636 classes participated in the survey (9’345 schoolchildren aged 11 to 15), which equals a participation rate of 74.2%.

The survey is based on a standardized self-administered paper questionnaire, completed in the classroom between March and June 2022. Participation was voluntary (with parental consent) and answers were strictly confidential.

The sex/gender analyses are thus based on the international question ‘Are you a boy or a girl?’ Therefore, it is not possible to know whether schoolchildren answered the question with reference to their sex assigned at birth or their gender identity.