

Social Media and Youth Mental Health

2023

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory



Social media use by young people is nearly universal

Up to 95% of young people aged 13-17 report using a social media platform. Nearly two thirds of teenagers report using social media every day and one third report using social media "almost constantly."^{1,2}



1. [Vogels et al., 2022](#). 
2. [Rideout et al., 2022](#). 

[Social Media and Youth Mental Health 2023 Report](#)

[Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory \(Executive Summary\)](#)

Social media presents a meaningful risk of harm to youth, while also providing benefits

The types of use and content children and adolescents are exposed to pose mental health concerns. Children and adolescents who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media face double the risk of mental health problems including experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety.³ This is concerning as a recent survey showed that teenagers spend an average of 3.5 hours a day on social media.⁴ And when asked about the impact of social media on their body image, 46% of adolescents aged 13-17 said social media makes them feel worse.⁵

3. [Riehm et al., 2019](#). 
4. [Miech et al., 2022](#). 
5. [Bickham et al., 2022](#). 

We can take immediate actions to make social media safer for youth

[The Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#) calls for engaging in a multifaceted effort to maximize the benefits and reduce the risk of harm posed by social media with actions suggested for groups including: children and adolescents, policymakers, technology companies, researchers, and families.

We cannot conclude that social media is sufficiently safe for children and adolescents

We have gaps in our full understanding of the mental health impacts posed by social media but at this point cannot conclude it is sufficiently safe for children and adolescents. We must better understand the answers to key questions, such as, which types of content are most harmful and what factors can protect young people from the negative effects of social media.

How can we take action?

At a moment when we are experiencing a national youth mental health crisis, now is the time to act swiftly and decisively to protect children and adolescents from risk of harm.

Click here for [Ways to Act Based on Your Role](#)