

PULL THE PLUG ON TV?

Q I am a 33-year-old adult with ADHD. I watch several hours of TV a night. It calms me down after a long day. Does watching TV have a positive effect on ADHD?

Some research shows that TV-watching has negative effects on ADHD. A long-term New Zealand study concluded that "...children who

watch a lot of television may become less tolerant of slower-paced and more mundane tasks, such as schoolwork." Similarly, the National Institute of Mental Health reported that "extensive exposure to television... may promote development of brain systems that scan and shift attention at the expense of

those that focus attention." These studies were done with children, but it seems reasonable that TV could have similar effects on adults.

There are concerns about the blue light emitted by electronic screens, including TV. The light is believed to inhibit melatonin production in the brain, and melatonin promotes sleep.

However, many adults with ADHD, particularly those with hyperactivity, have difficulty relaxing.

TV is an easy way to unwind at the end of the day. Who hasn't fallen asleep in front of the TV? If TV calms your mind and body, that's certainly a good thing.

Like many things related to ADHD, the key is to find what works for you. Think about expanding your repertoire of relaxation activities to include reading, guided meditation, or ADHD-friendly yoga techniques. —*Beth Main, BCC, LPC, founder of ADHD Solutions*

