

## How does social media affect kids' developing brains? US Surgeon General releases mental health advisory

The U.S. surgeon general [released an advisory \[recently\]](#) warning that the country's children "have become unknowing participants in a decades-long experiment" of social media use. The trouble is, the results aren't in yet.

There is no question that the nation is experiencing a crisis in youth mental health. In 2021, 42 percent of high school students in a [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study](#) reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

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[Statistically, some studies have found](#) significant associations between heavy social media use and mental health challenges; others, including an analysis focused on the more general category of "digital technology," have found that the correlation of mental health issues to spending a lot of time online is only as strong as the association between mental health problems and benign activities such as "[eating potatoes](#)." Others, still, have discovered *positive* effects of social media use — especially among LGBTQ+ kids and members of other marginalized communities who can often find more diversity and acceptance on the internet than they do at home. Sometimes, [different groups of scientists](#) analyze the same set of numbers and come to opposite conclusions.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the full article here\*\*](#)