



# Our teens in pain from too much TV

By **Michael Lavery**

IRISH teens who spend too long in front of computer and TV screens are developing back-pain and headaches, parents were warned today.

A new study has found a link between the amounts of time they spend using computers, watching TV and playing computer games and back and head pain.

The study's authors think the link might not be related to the kind of screen activity they are engaged in but to the amount of time they spend doing it - and how they sit or stand.

"Screen time is fine in small quantities, but longer periods sitting down, hunched over in the same position for hours on end can be seriously detrimental to a person's health," **Attrac** **ta Farrell**, president of the **Chiropractic** Association of Ireland said.

"Not moving for extended periods causes the muscles in the neck, arms and back to stiffen and become sore," she said.

"On top of that, slouching

increases the amount of compressive force in the spine.

"This increased force may, over a period of time, fatigue the spinal muscles and cause pain or may lead to early degenerative changes," Dr Farrell said.

But despite the risks, it's not necessary for teens to give up their technology entirely.

"It's all about moderation," she said. "Computers and TV can be a valuable source of entertainment and education for young people and you're never going to convince them to give it up altogether."

## PAINFUL

But it was important to make sure they understand the dangers of excessive screen time and how to avoid painful back pain, she added.

They should be encouraged to sit up with their shoulders back and their feet on the floor. They should also take frequent breaks to walk around and stretch, to stop muscles getting tight and strained.