Teen Hospitalized after a 4-day Video Game Binge

Here’s one way to tell that you’ve been spending too much time with the Xbox: Your lips turn blue and you collapse
Source: The Week.com, August 12, 2012

Early Tuesday morning in Columbus, Ohio, 15-year-old Tyler Rigsby emerged from his bedroom after at least four straight days of playing Call of Duty: Modern Warfare, lured out by his mom with the promise of visiting his aunt's house. Once there, Rigsby collapsed three times, his face pale and lips blue. Emergency doctors at a local hospital treated him for severe dehydration and exhaustion, and his mom, Jessie Rawlins, promptly got rid of the Xbox. Rigsby isn't the first person to sacrifice his health thanks to video-game addiction, either. Here's a look at his story, and the bizarre tendency to game-till-you-drop:

Did Rigsby really play Modern Warfare for four days?
Four or five; his family isn't really sure. Rigsby did nap for a couple hours here and there during his marathon gaming session, and leave his room a few times — for snacks, bathroom breaks, and one quick shower — but otherwise was holed up with his Xbox. By the time he arrived at his aunt's house, "it's like he was looking at me but he wasn't there — it was like he was looking through me," the aunt, Jennifer Thompson, tells WCMH-TV. "We were talking and I heard a thump and I looked over and he just fell."

What caused him to collapse?
Dehydration, most likely: When you expel more liquids than you drink in, your blood volume shrinks, lowering blood pressure, sometimes to the point where a lack of oxygen in your brain makes you pass out, says Dr. Mike Patrick, an emergency physician at Nationwide Children's Hospital. Severe dehydration can also cause brain swelling, seizures, kidney failure, coma, blood clots, and even death. Of course, it's
possible Rigsby passed out because he had barely slept for four or five days, says Dr. Patrick. "After so long, [your neural system] stops firing and you just go to sleep whether you want to or not." This was the first time Rigsby had such an incident, Rawlins tells The Columbus Dispatch. "I never in a million years thought that a video game would involve his health."

**Are such gaming-related mishaps unusual?**
Not unusual enough. In some ways, Rigsby was lucky, says Michelle Castillo at CBS News. Other non-stop gamers who forgot to drink liquids have died. Asia seems especially prone to gaming **fatalities**: Last month, a Taiwanese 18-year-old died in an internet cafe after a nonstop 40-hour Diablo session, while a Chinese gamer died in February 2011 after playing for three days with little food or sleep.

However, the problem is global. In August 2011, 20-year-old British "Xbox addict" Chris Staniforth died after a blood clot traveled to his lung from his calf, a consequence of sitting for extended periods. And the gamers themselves aren't the only ones who get hurt: In 2010, a British mother was banned from the internet and given a two-year suspended sentence for neglecting her three kids and two dogs because she was so engrossed in the online game Small Worlds.

**What lessons can we draw from Tyler's close call?**
For one, says Dr. Patrick, those who insist on marathon gaming need to use some common sense: Remember to drink and eat enough, get up and move around every once in a while, and turn off the TV or computer and get some real sleep. We also have to look at Rigsby's "mom's inability to **intervene** and end this persistent threat to the health of her child over the course of five days," says Owen Good at video game review site Kotaku. Five days! Getting rid of the Xbox is a good step, but like other experts, Good doubts it "totally solves all the problems in this household."
Comprehension questions – answers may be in phrases.

1. Define expel as used in the article.

2. What side effects are associated with dehydration?

3. Use context clues to define fatalities.

4. Use context words to define the word engrossed as used in the article.

2. Answer each question in one or more complete sentences.

· Are you a hardcore gamer? If not, do you know any? What's the longest stretch of video gaming that you or your friends have ever done?

· In your opinion, do video games have an overall positive or negative impact on teenagers? Why?

3. Answer each question in one or more complete sentences.

- Should there be a minimum age for playing video games? Why or why not?

- Should Rigsby’s parents be charged with neglect for letting their son do so much gaming?

4. Is video gaming something you need to keep under control in order to be successful in high school? If not, what are your “binge” habits and how can you work on controlling them? Answer in a well-developed paragraph.