



Internet Safety

The Internet. It can be a great learning resource. It can also pose a great problem. The world's most democratic medium also opens your kids to content you'd rather remained undiscovered. To protect your children against unwanted web stuff, talk to them. You might find out that you're worrying more than you need too. Children today are very intelligent about technology and media content and may have a more mature attitude to the Internet that you think. In any case, clear communication is the key. Here are some ways for your family to be Internet safe.

INTERNET SAFETY

1. **Set the online rules.** Decide with your kids when they can be online, the length of time, and appropriate pages to visit.
2. **Teach them to be responsible.** Teach them the possibilities of the Internet and the responsibility those possibilities carry.
3. **Teach them not everyone can be trusted.** The Internet is a solicitous medium. Teach your children not to give out their Internet password, name, number, address, parents' work address/telephone number, or name and location of their school.
4. **Teach them to tell you.** Tell your children to tell you when someone online asks for personal information about them.
5. **Teach them to show you.** Participate in what they do online. Let them show you where they go. Not only will you find out what they do, but you'll also find out about what interests them.
6. **Teach them to stand up for themselves.** Tell them about peer pressure and tell them it's OK to say no to doing things they don't want to do. Tell them that this applies to the Internet, too.
7. **Teach them not everything online is as it seems.** The Internet is quite anonymous. And in chat room settings, some people use that to their advantage. Tell your children that people sometimes pretend to be someone different than they really are on the Internet, and that they should be careful to not believe everything people say.
8. **Teach them that good and bad people exist everywhere.** With so much positive hype about the Internet in the market, it's easy to see why kids think the Internet is good for good people. Tell them that they should be skeptical of people they don't know online, and that they should keep their distance and not make friends too quickly.
9. **Teach them perspective.** If someone on the Internet says something bad to your child, teach your children that it's not their fault.

10 Ways to Stay Safe On The Net

It's cool, it's fast, it can be fun, and you're told time and again that it's safe. However, being careful online is no different than being careful offline. Some details are different but the basic rule is the same: use your common sense, and always look both ways before you surf.

1. **Don't Give Out Personal Information**
Never give out your full name, address & phone number. Never give out your Internet password. Never. Change your password often. Take the time to read the website policy!
2. **Protect Yourself From Spam**
When posting to an email list or bulletin board; do not give out your main email address. Instead use Hotmail or other "disposable" address.

3. **Protect Your Money**

- One of the biggest issues for the Internet today is security. If you absolutely do not want anyone to know about or exchange your personal and financial information, don't buy anything on the Internet. If you choose to purchase online, follow these precautions:
- Only give out your credit card information to a secure site.
- Never give anyone your bank account number, social security number or other personal information that isn't needed to complete a transaction.
- You can check if a site is secure by looking at the lower portion of the screen if you are using Internet Explorer. To view more information about the security, double click on the lock. With Netscape, look at your security icon (looks like a padlock). If it is locked, the site is secure, unlocked means that you should not give a credit card number. For more information about the security, just click on the padlock.
- Ensure that it is a reputable site.

4. **Get Rich Quick! Not.**

If it sounds too good to be true, well, guess what? If you get unsolicited e-mail that says you can make thousands of dollars in a few days, don't believe it.

5. **A Good Virus Scan Is Worth Its Weight In Programmers**

New viruses come out daily. Update your virus scan frequently. Read the manual.

6. **Protect Yourself from Email Viruses**

Do not open email attachments that are programs (the file name will be *.exe). The most common way to get a virus is from email attachments that are executable programs. Receiving these in emails is harmless, but opening them and running the program can infect your computer. Trash them. Delete.

7. **Be Careful What You Ask For**

Always scan downloaded programs and files from the Internet.

8. **Stalking**

If you think you are being stalked online, log off. If someone is sending threatening emails, report it to the police.

9. **Shopping**

Shop online only with companies you know. If you don't know a company, ask for a print catalog before you decide to order electronically.

10. **Disguise Your Own Activities**

Use a secure browser that will encrypt or scramble purchase information. If you don't have encryption software, consider calling the merchants' 800 number, faxing your order, or paying with a cheque. Or look for software that can be downloaded from the Internet at no charge.