Cyber Safety Tips

Privacy, security and youth

Staying safe on the Internet means staying aware. Each of us is responsible for our own - and our families' - privacy and safety on the Internet. Always know where your children are surfing, which links they are clicking on and the privacy policy of any website that asks for personal information (for example, if signing up for a gaming site). Some Internet sites and emails try to trick users into downloading unwanted files, purchasing products and giving away information. Keeping your children safe may require extra steps such as setting up an Internet filter on your home computer and using passwords to limit full Internet browser access.

Rules to remember

Here are four rules to follow when browsing the Internet that will help keep children and young people safe:

- *NEVER* tell passwords or PIN numbers to anyone. Change user names and passwords regularly.

- *NEVER* open email attachments or download files from unrecognized senders or websites.

- *ALWAYS* be aware of what a website may do with personal information or pictures. If a site does not have a privacy policy, don't disclose personal information.

- *REMEMBER* that once you write, upload or add information to the Internet there is no going back -- so think before you click.

Did You Know…

Avoid cyber-infections Hackers and viruses can gain access to home computers by tricking users into downloading infected files. The download is sometimes prompted by an action you have taken, sometimes just by visiting a website or opening an email. Teach your children to **never** accept mysterious download requests from emails or websites.

What to watch out for online

Online chatting

- Remember it's easy for people to lie about age, sex, location and intentions during an online chat.

- Chatting allows others to send information you do not want such as inappropriate messages, photos or videos.
- Cyberbullying can happen in online chat rooms.

Photo sharing

- Don't forget -- once you send a photo anywhere on the Internet it is out of your control.
- Photos on the Internet can be manipulated, possibly putting the people in the picture in a compromising situation.
- Photos sent to a private individual can easily be further distributed by that person.
- Photos posted online can be viewed and downloaded by anyone -- and distributed worldwide.

Webcams

- Be very careful about using webcams -- especially with people you or your children do not know.
- Once a webcam broadcasts a video, it can be captured by the other person's computer and saved for later viewing or distribution.
- If your computer has been hacked, another user could remotely control your webcam. Unplug or cover your camera when it's not in use.
- Don't believe anyone who says that appearing in front of a webcam is a way to get a start in modeling or show business -- legitimate businesses DO NOT operate like this.

Online gaming

- Many online games allow for live text and voice chats, making it easier for children to accidentally or willingly disclose personal information to a stranger.

Did You Know...

Respect others' privacy Make sure your children get their friends' permission before posting anything about them - especially photos -- online.

Source: Cyber Safety Tips. Health Canada, 2011. Reproduced with the permission from the Minister of Health, 2012.