

## BASIC INTERNET SAFETY TIPS

1. Make sure safety/privacy settings are high, and set parental controls on each online streaming service, but recognize that it is impossible to filter out all unwanted material, even with specially designed software. Use passwords so children cannot go online unless they ask you first.
2. Clear your browser history regularly, and be aware that what you view online may impact the types of ads that are displayed. Children may inadvertently easily access content that may be unsuitable for their age or developmental level. Do not view adult material on family devices.
3. Pay attention to Internet sites and games that incorporate a chat component – use caution before permitting children to engage in chats.
4. Tell your children that they always need your permission before doing any online quizzes or contests (these may be techniques to obtain personal information for advertising or scams), or for downloading any files or apps. Files should only be downloaded from people or sites that are known and trusted.
5. Explain that once a picture/video/text/sext is sent online, they lose control of where it goes and what is done with it. Even if something is shared via an app that guarantees it will disappear, it can be saved to someone's phone or computer.
6. Sending, forwarding or requesting a sexual/intimate image (photo or video) may be a criminal offence, including child pornography charges.
7. Teach children to respect the privacy and reputation of themselves and others:
  - Never say/post anything mean, rude, hurtful, threatening or untrue about someone online (some of these statements/images may even be against the law). Don't give in to pressure to do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. Ask, "How would you feel if someone did that to you, or your best friend?"
  - If they receive a rude or unkind message about someone, or a picture, do not forward it.
  - Don't say anything that they would be afraid to say in person. Ask, "Would it be okay if I did or said this face-to-face?"
  - Don't post or share pictures/videos of family, friends, or anyone else, unless they have been given permission to do so.
  - If they received a sexual message/photo/video, even if they felt good about it, they don't have to send one back in return.
  - Don't post anything that could damage their friendships or reputation, (a coach, teacher, or future employer could be the next visitor to the page – employers often use the Internet to find current and past information about someone before hiring).
  - Avoid posting any information online that might reveal who you are (e.g., your school), using provocative names and sexual language, and making comments about sexual interests or the use of alcohol and/or drugs.

8. Teach children how to block anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, including anyone who:
  - communicates rudely;
  - appears to be sending “overly friendly” messages;
  - wants to talk about sex or asks for a “sexy” picture;
  - offers “gifts” or wants to establish a “special” relationship;
  - persists even after they have been told “no” (they don’t have to respond to any message that makes them uncomfortable);
  - tells them they can earn money quickly; and/or
  - threatens.
9. Caution children to never share their password with friends. Insist that they give you a sealed envelope with a list of their user names and passwords, in case of emergency, or if they lose their password.
10. Before children/youth meet anyone in person that they have only met online, discuss the situation with a parent/caregiver. If a parent/caregiver approves of the meeting, consider safety precautions, including taking someone with them, meeting in a public place, having a cell phone, and a plan for leaving if feeling uncomfortable.
11. Turn the computer and webcam off when they are not being used. Consider setting limits around the use of electronic devices and the Internet, including online gaming (e.g., how late they are allowed to be online). Switch off auto-play on platforms to avoid binging on programs, and difficulty enforcing time limits.
12. Think about designating screen free times or areas at home (e.g., during meals, all devices put in the kitchen after a certain time in the evening/at night).
13. Reinforce to children that they should always tell an adult if they feel uncomfortable, upset or threatened about anything online – don’t wait to tell.
14. Show children how to contact [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca) to report any concerns about online sexual exploitation.
15. Think carefully before posting any information and images of your children online, including personal details that could identify you or your family (e.g., the children in their school uniform, where the children go, especially if they are unsupervised).
16. Consider the potential impact of posting information and images of your children without their informed consent (e.g., children may be embarrassed by the content, feel their privacy has been violated). This creates a digital footprint that often starts in infancy, without permission of the individual.
17. If you or a caregiver has an online dating profile, do not include any information about your children or children they look after.

## INTERNET TIPS FOR TEENS<sup>1</sup>

1. Be smart about what you post on the Web and what you say to others. The Web is a lot more public and permanent than it seems.
2. Provocative and sexy names and pictures can draw attention from people you don't want in your life.
3. Sexy pictures can get you into trouble with the law. If you are underage, they may be considered child pornography, a serious crime.
4. Be careful what you download or look at, even for a laugh. Some of the images on the Internet are extreme, and you can't "unsee" something.
5. Going to sex chat rooms and other sex sites may connect you with people who can harass you in ways you don't anticipate.
6. Free downloads and file-sharing can put pornography on your computer that you may not want and can be hard to get rid of. Any pornography that shows children or teens under 18 is illegal child pornography and can get you in big trouble.
7. Adults who talk to you about sex are committing a crime. So are adults who meet underage teens for sex. Some teens think it might be fun, harmless or romantic, but it means serious trouble for everyone. It's best to report it.
8. Don't play along with people on the Web who are acting badly, taking risks and being weird. Even if you think it's harmless and feel like you can handle it, it only encourages them and may endanger other young people.
9. Report it when other people are acting weird and inappropriately or harassing you or others. It's less trouble just to log off, but these people may be dangerous. Save the communication. Contact the site management, your service provider, the CyberTipline<sup>2</sup> or even the police.
10. Don't let friends influence your better judgement. If you are surfing with other kids, don't let them pressure you to do things you ordinarily wouldn't.
11. Be careful if you ever go to meet someone you have gotten to know through the Internet. You may think you know them well, but they may fool you. Go with a friend. Tell your parents. Meet in a public place. Make sure you have your cell phone and an exit plan.
12. Don't harass others. People may retaliate in ways you don't expect.
13. You can overestimate your ability to handle things. It may feel like you are careful, savvy, aware of dangers, and able to manage the risks you take, but there are always unknowns. Don't risk disasters.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.cybertip.ca](http://www.cybertip.ca) is Canada's national tipline for reporting online sexual exploitation.