

Action Steps to Take Today for Virus Protection

Protecting your computer against viruses, spyware, hackers, and other malicious programs is not a simple task. But taking these actions today will reduce the likelihood that it will become infected by these threats.

1. Back up all of your important data files and e-mails, and establish a procedure that will keep all new and changed files backed up as well.
2. Update your Operating System, Browser, E-Mail Program, and applications, and ensure that they are set to be updated automatically as new fixes are released.
3. Install appropriate security software, consistent with your exposure level and the confidentiality/sensitivity of the information stored on your computer. This software will always include anti-virus and anti-spyware protection and a software firewall. It may also include web filtering, encryption, password validation, and other security products.
4. Practice “safe surfing,” being careful about the web sites you visit.
5. Don’t fall for pop-up messages claiming your computer is infected, and never give a credit card to companies making those claims.
6. Be suspicious of e-mail messages, even if they appear to come from someone you know. Some especially likely symptoms of malicious e-mail:
 - No subject line
 - Addressed to multiple recipients in alphabetical order, or “Undisclosed Recipients”
 - No message content, just a link to click on
 - Includes an attachment
7. If using social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and others, always sign out when you are through with a session.
8. Don’t “friend” someone unless you really do know them.
9. Use different User Names and Passwords for different accounts.
10. Define strong passwords for every login, meeting at least these minimum specifications:
 - At least 8 characters long (longer is better)
 - No word that would be found in a dictionary
 - At least one capital letter, at least one lower-case letter, and at least one number

While it’s never possible to be 100% protected, following these steps will prevent the most common methods used to infect your computer.

For a more detailed list of preventive measures, you may go to www.thevirusdoc.com and download the free article *12 Steps to Virus Protection*. For computer support technicians, The Virus Doctor™ also offers Virus Remediation Training workshops on a scheduled basis or on-site at your location. You can find more information on these workshops on the same web site.