

Using on the internet without virus protection is a bit like being dropped in the middle of the Pacific wearing little kids floaties! You may survive but probably won't. If you use the internet you need to have virus protection. Cleaning up a virus can cost you - it is very inconvenient to not have the use of your computer and to possibly have lost valuable data.

Below is a list of tips and suggestions on this topic.

1. Firstly, install an antivirus program and an anti-spyware program. You need to have these on your computer before you go on the internet. Make sure you keep your virus definitions up to date and run a full system scan weekly. You can set this up within the software when installed. AVG offers free anti-virus software for basic internet use.
2. This is a very important point. Never click on a link or attachment in an email that you are not positive is from a trusted source. If the email looks suspicious it usually is. Be wary of any attachment to an email you are not sure who sent it.
3. Another way a virus can infect your computer is through a random pop up that pops up when browsing the internet. Especially if you see a pop up that looks like antivirus software and tells you your computer has a problem, it may be a scam. Close the pop up, update your antivirus program and run a full scan.
4. Set up your Windows to automatically download patches and upgrades. This allows your computer to download any updates to both Windows and Internet Explorer. These updates may fix security programs and block spyware programs and viruses.
5. Use different web browsers. Try Firefox or Safari (Firefox can be downloaded at <http://www.mozilla.org/> and Safari at <http://www.apple.com/safari/download/>). Some of these web browsers can have better security than Internet Explorer.
6. When you are surfing the internet you may see occasionally a malicious script asking if you want to install an automatic install. Say "No" unless you know the site requesting the install.
7. Consider getting a Mac for your next computer. Many viruses are written for Windows and Macs have very good inbuilt protection.
8. Make sure your windows firewall is turned on. You will find this by clicking start then control panel. Windows Firewall can help prevent hackers or malicious software from gaining access to your computer through the internet or a network.
9. Back up your data. If you do get a virus at least you have a backup of your important files.
10. Talk to your children about these suggestions. If everyone in your house knows the basics it will help keep your home network running smoothly.