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# How do you stay safe . . . with e-mail and instant messages?

**E-mail and IM. It is quick. Easy.  
Direct. But it is not always secure.**

- Do not send sensitive photographs, personal, financial or confidential information via e-mail or in an instant message (IM).
- Ensure that online profiles do not contain personal identifying information – name, age, date of birth, address, phone number or school name. Use age and gender neutral names.
- Always ask, “Would I say this to someone’s face?” If not, do not say it in an e-mail or IM.
- Delete online contacts you do not recognize.
- Give your cell number out only to people you know and trust. Never give anyone else’s number out without permission. Do not post your cell phone number online.

*turn for more tips on e-mail and instant messaging*

## Keeping safe with e-mail and IM:

- Never reply to text messages or open attachments from people you do not know. If in doubt, delete the file and use the telephone.
- Never take pictures of anyone with your cellphone, without their permission.
- Learn to recognize Spam and delete it before reading. Do not forward or reply to Spam. Close your preview panel.
- Avoid clicking on links. Not all links are legitimate: they may contain malicious codes like viruses or they may redirect you to undesirable sites.
- Be selective with your primary e-mail address and use a secondary e-mail address for all other purposes like entering contests.
- When sending e-mails to multiple recipients, place your friends and families personal e-mail addresses in the Blind Carbon Copy (Bcc) area. This will prevent exposing their e-mail address in cyber space.
- Invest in protective software programs, anti-virus, firewall, Spam blocker and antispyware technology. Keep them up-to-date to be sure they continue to do their job as new technologies evolve.
- Be aware of your families e-mail and IM activities. Teach them to expect that you will view their online profiles. Ensure rules of good behavior remain intact when on the computer.



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