

Be Safe and Smart Online

These days, it's difficult to function in the world without an online presence. Try these tips for protecting your privacy and safety online:

- ▶ **Think before clicking.** “Phishing” is when online scammers send you a message that lures you into clicking on a fake link. Often, the goal is to gain access to your personal information or infect your device with malware. Some scammers may pose as a friend, colleague, or company with which you do business. They may try to pressure you into acting quickly to avoid terrible consequences (such as losing access to a service).
- ▶ **Be smart on social media.** Before interacting with someone you do not know, check the person's profile to verify that they are not a bot or scammer. Never share your phone number, address, or other identifying information on social media.
- ▶ **Change passwords frequently.** The best passwords are a 10-18 character mix of numbers, lower and upper case letters, and symbols. When possible, opt for two-factor authentication (2FA).
- ▶ **Be wary of free wi-fi.** Open wi-fi networks are easy prey for scammers. Avoid logging on to sites that contain sensitive personal information (such as a banking app) unless you are using a VPN.



- ▶ **Stay sharp on dating sites.** Red flag behaviors include someone wanting to immediately move your conversation from the dating app to email, providing excuses for why they can't meet in person, or asking for money.
- ▶ **Don't say or do something you might regret.** Once you hit “send” on an email, text, or social media post, you lose control of it. Even if you delete it later, it could still be saved by the recipient or others who have access to the post. Keep in mind that your online actions could impact your current or future career prospects or damage your reputation or relationships with loved ones.
- ▶ **Be respectful.** The best advice for online behavior is to treat others with the same courtesy that you would use in the real world.

No matter how careful you are online, identity theft is still a risk. Call LifeMatters for assistance with recovering from an incident.

Call **LifeMatters®** toll-free anytime. **1-800-634-6433**

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*SMS messages will be sent for the duration of the chat. Message and data rates may apply. Text HELP for help and STOP to cancel. SMS terms of service at <https://www.empathia.com/sms/terms.pdf>. Privacy policy: <https://www.empathia.com/privacy.pdf>

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