

7 Tips to Protect Your Computer From Viruses and Malware

1. Keep your software up to date

- Software makers like Microsoft and Oracle routinely update their software to fix bugs that could potentially be exploited by hackers. Oracle just released on Sunday an update to its Java software to fix a security hole hackers could have used to infect computers with malware.



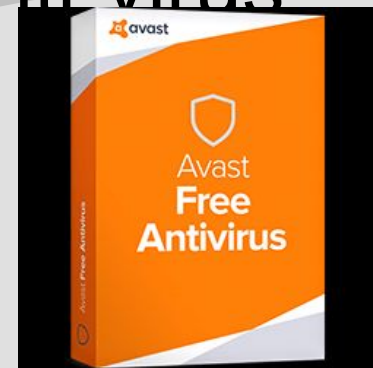
2. Don't click on links within emails

- A good rule of thumb is if you don't recognize a sender of an email, don't click on any links within it. Microsoft says 44.8 percent of Windows virus infections happen because the computer user clicked on something.



3. Use free antivirus software

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- You don't have to pay for software to protect your computer or for an annual subscription to maintain the latest virus protection. For Windows users, Microsoft Security Essentials is free. Avast is another free anti-virus program.
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4. Back up your computer

- “ • Do you regularly back up the information on your computer? If you don't – and 29 percent of computer users fall into that category – you have no protection from calamities ranging from hard drive failure to your house burning down. If you value your data, back it up.”



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5. Use a strong password

- A strong password is one that is complex, with a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. While some people use the same password for everything, try to avoid that practice.
- *Password security company SplashData.com says the three most common passwords are password, 123456, and 12345678. The company recommends avoiding using the same user name/password combination for multiple online site logins.*



6. Minimize downloads

- “ • Make sure your Web browser's security settings are high enough to detect unauthorized downloads. For Internet Explorer, the medium security setting is the minimum level to use.



7. Use a pop-up blocker



- Web browsers have the ability to stop pop-up windows and allow you to set the security for accepting pop-ups. The federal “ OnGuardOnline site recommends never clicking on links within pop-up screens.
- Even the most vigilant of computer users still” run the risk of picking up malware. You should suspect a computer virus if your machine slows down, crashes, or repeats error messages.

Thanks for listening

“ . These days protecting yourself from viruses and lost data is much easier than it used to be and doesn't have to cost a dime. Take a few minutes today to make sure you're protected. You'll be glad you did.”

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Your PC ran into a problem and needs to restart. We're just collecting some error info, and then we'll restart for you. (0% complete)

If you'd like to know more, you can search online later for this error: HAL_INITIALIZATION_FAILED

