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| **Tips for Safe Surfing** |

There are many precautions you can take as a child, teen or young adult while surfing the Internet.**First, ALWAYS remember that you should NEVER give ANY personal information out about yourself** unless you are with an adult, and they approve. While not all sites or individuals that collect information from children are illegal, it is better to be safe than sorry. It is also illegal to collect any personal information about children under the age of 13. This is called [**COPPA**](http://www.safesurfingkids.com/coppa.htm), the [**Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998**](http://www.safesurfingkids.com/coppa.htm).Perhaps one of the best pieces of advice that you've probably heard over and over, "don't talk to strangers" is good to remember when you're on the Internet. The only problem is, pretty much everyone is a 'stranger' online, when you think about it.Some [**predators have even been known to pose as friends, neighbors, or classmates**](http://www.safesurfingkids.com/online_fakers_danger.htm) in order to gain personal information from kids who are online. http://www.safesurfingkids.com/ey.jpgRemember, anything you say in a chat room can be monitored by anyone else there. It may seem strange, but predators will actually keep logs of messages they see going back and forth, and may use them to fool you into thinking they are someone they're not.Predators may use information from your 'online' profile if you have one, your screen name or user ID, and any messages they see. Even a screen name as simple as "**cachrtger1990**" might give a predator enough information to know how old you are and what school you go to. If your family or friends know what your screen name means, don't count on the fact that no one else can figure out its meaning.

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| **A Checklist For Safe Surfing** |

 Never give any information out about yourself (or anyone else) over the Internet. Never download any files on to your computer without a parent or adult's consent. If anyone online says anything inappropriate to you, harasses you, or sends you unwanted e-mail, tell an adult immediately, and report it to the proper authorities. Remember that on the Internet, people can pretend to be who they are not, and they may go to great lengths to sound convincing. If you use chat rooms, use a different chat name (if possible) than your user name or e-mail address. Remember, Internet friendships, relationships, and conversations can never be as true, personal, and rewarding as they are in person. If you really need to talk to someone, find a friend, family member, or adult you trust. Be wary of ANYONE who wants to know personal information about you. Remember that sometimes, when you are on the Internet, you may accidentally meet bad people or see things that are bad, but it's not your fault! If something you read or look at is upsetting, stop looking at it, and go tell an adult you trust or parent. If you feel like you have no one you can turn to to talk to at home, you can call a place called 'Covenant House,' at **1-800-999-9999**. Never buy anything over the Internet without your parent or guardian's approval. |