How do I get rid of it now?

So you suspect your computer has an infection. How can you find out for sure? Follow these steps in order:

1. **Scan your System for Viruses with an Antivirus Program.**
   If you already own an antivirus program and your computer is operable, you can start your antivirus program and initiate a scan of your entire computer. However, chances are if you contracted a virus, the virus definitions that your program is using are out-of-date. So first, visit the Web site of your antivirus manufacturer and update your antivirus software by downloading the latest definitions.
2. **Scan your System for Spyware using an Anti-Spyware Program.**
   You are best to purge all the spyware that the program detected, but every now and then, a necessary program or part of a program may be affected. If a program stops working after removing spyware, you may need to reinstall it.
3. **Apply all Service Packs and Updates to your Operating System.**
   This will help prevent re-infection by fixing problems exploited by the viruses or spyware.

If your computer is badly infected and/or you have trouble with the removal, remember that you can always take your computer to a computer professional.

Better.Business.Solutions

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Help! My Computer is Infected!

A discussion of viruses and other malicious programs..

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What is a Computer Virus?

A computer virus is simply code that attaches itself to some part of the normal computer operating system or computer program. Instructions in this code tell the computer to perform some task. This task can be a destructive one, such as deleting important information, crashing the hard disk, or allowing hackers access to the computer and any information that is stored on it. However, there are other benign viruses that may be only a slight aggravation.

The most usual symptom of a computer virus is erratic behavior. The destruction can happen at any rate of speed and can affect almost any part of the computer. In some cases, a virus can reside inside your computer in an inactive state, waiting for a certain event (like a certain date) to happen. If your computer starts to act a little weird, the first thing to do is to check for a virus. From the moment the virus infiltrated your computer to the time that it made itself known to you, you could have innocently spread the virus to others.

How Does a Computer Get a Virus?

Just as a human virus is passed from person to person, a computer virus is passed from computer to computer. A virus can be attached to any file that you copy to your computer. If you download files from the Internet or copy programs or files from friends, you are very susceptible to viruses. Although it is rare,

viruses have even been found in commercial shrink-wrapped software.

Many viruses are spread through e-mail. Certain types of today's viruses are very dangerous because you do not even have to open an e-mail attachment to release the virus. Just opening the e-mail itself can release the dangerous bug.

Other viruses will also attempt to spread to any computer connected to the infected computer. These viruses spread through uncorrected security holes in the operating system.

Other Threats: Spyware

Within the last few years, a new type of vicious programming has started to invade computers around the world. Spyware (sometimes called Adware or Malware) is downloaded to your computer to gather information that is usually used for marketing purposes. Some variants are fairly innocent, while others are extremely invasive. Spyware bots almost always track the Internet browsing habits of the user. Some can even capture passwords and personal information. At their worst, spyware bots can take complete control of a remote PC.

Often spyware is characterized by unusual windows popping up on your computer, but your computer can be infected by spyware even if there are no annoying pop ups. This parasitic software is often completely transparent to the end-user, so your computer can be infected without your knowledge.

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Prevention

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. You can avoid behaviors that increase your chances of infection:

- Don't ever click on an unsolicited e-mail or purchase anything from spam.
- Stay away from peer-to-peer sharing programs and porn sites which are notorious for viruses and spyware.
- Watch the kids and grandkids and make sure they don't download suspect software.

In addition, we recommend 3 preventative actions to protect against viruses and other similar threats.

Maintain an Active Antivirus Software

Antivirus programs check all files before they enter your computer and will alert you if a virus is detected before it contaminates your system. Remember, if you disable your virus protection software at any point, this leaves you open for infection.

Scan for Adware/Spyware regularly

Two good programs are Ad-aware and Spybot – Search and Destroy. You may want to perform a scan as often as weekly. Certainly, at least monthly.

Keep You Operating System Updated

Download and install critical updates to your system on a regular basis. Critical updates fix problems that some viruses use to infect systems.