

What does anti-virus software do?

Anti-virus software can identify and block many viruses before they can infect your computer. Once you install anti-virus software, it is important to keep it up to date.

Anti-virus software scans files or your computer's memory for certain patterns that may indicate an infection. The patterns it looks for are based on the signatures, or definitions, of known viruses. Virus authors are continually releasing new and updated viruses, so it is important that you have the latest definitions installed on your computer.

Once you have installed anti-virus software, you should scan your entire computer periodically.

Which software should you use?

There are many vendors who produce anti-virus software, and deciding which one to choose can be confusing. All anti-virus software performs the same function, so your decision may be driven by recommendations, particular features, availability, or price. InfoGuard can assist you choosing the right protection for your needs.

Installing any anti-virus software, regardless of which package you choose, increases your level of protection. Be careful, though, of email messages claiming to include anti-virus software. Some recent viruses arrive as an email supposedly from your ISP's technical support department, containing an attachment that claims to be anti-virus software. However, the attachment itself is in fact a virus, so you could become infected by opening it.

How do you get the current virus information?

This process may differ depending what product you choose, so find out what your anti-virus software requires. Many anti-virus packages include an option to automatically receive updated virus definitions. Because new information is added frequently, it is a good idea to take advantage of this option. Resist believing email chain letters that claim that a well-known anti-virus vendor has recently detected the "worst virus in history" that will destroy your computer's hard drive. These emails are usually hoaxes. You can confirm virus information through your anti-virus vendor or through resources offered by other anti-virus vendors.

While installing anti-virus software is one of the easiest and most effective ways to protect your computer, it has its limitations. Because it relies on signatures, anti-virus software can only detect viruses that have signatures installed on your computer, so it is important to keep these signatures up to date. You will still be susceptible to viruses that circulate before the anti-virus vendors add their signatures, so continue to take other safety precautions as well. InfoGuard can ensure that your machines are up to date and as protected as possible. Ask for more details.