5 Tips to **Keep Teens Safe Online**

Featuring insights from Cox Mobile's 2025 Connecting the Digital Dots Survey and resources from Common Sense Media

According to a recent survey from Cox Mobile, **86%** of the sandwich generation—adults caring for both their children and aging parents—say that managing online safety for both groups adds stress to their lives.

Many are prioritizing online vigilance and open conversations, especially with their teens: **nearly 60%** say they discuss online safety with their children several times a week or even daily. Still, a disconnect remains. The same survey found that more than a quarter of teens report feeling stressed and anxious from being constantly connected and using digital devices.

This gap signals the need for more proactive conversation and action between parents and teens to foster a healthier and safer digital experience. Not sure where to begin with your teen?

Did you know?

Internet providers and device manufacturers have safety and security features built into their products. These can include malicious activity screening, parental controls, remote monitoring options and more.

1. Safeguard your accounts

Consider discussing the importance of managing location settings, reviewing app permissions and using secure browsers and search engines with your teen.

Strong passwords are also key. Encourage your teen to create unique passwords, update them regularly, and store them safely. Start the conversation by explaining why these steps matter, and work together to put them in place.

2. Think outside your home network

Online safety for your teens starts at home, but it doesn't stop there.

If a teacher, coach or friend asks your child to use a specific app or website, encourage your child to consider any cybersecurity red flags, asking questions, like:

- Is the site secure? Look for "HTTPS" and a trusted source.

- Does the site require a login and password before sharing personal data?

- What are the privacy settings? Check that they are set to protect information that shouldn't be shared.

- **Still uneasy?** Ask an adult for guidance.

3. Avoid the urge to overshare

Your teen may need to be reminded about what to keep private online. That includes their full name, address, phone number, passwords and any photos that reveal personal details. Even small clues can add up and expose more than intended.

Location services are especially tricky, as they can reveal more information about your teen's daily routines or even your home address. Encourage your child to turn off location tagging and sharing and to avoid posting about their whereabouts in real time. Remind them that one post or photo can unintentionally share more than they realize, so it's important to think before sharing.

4. Separate fact from fiction

Cox's recent survey found that more than a fifth of teens have experienced mis/disinformation online in the last 12 months, so cross-checking information on social media and AI tools is essential to avoid misinformation.

Help your teen practice caution when interacting with unverified accounts, potential clickbait, and headlines that don't match the content. Remind them to always verify with trusted sources.

Because generative AI is so new and pulls from potentially unreliable data sources, this tool can also provide inaccurate answers. Teens often use generative AI for personal questions, so it's important to talk to them about how to spot false or misleading information and how to verify any AI outputs.

5. Words matter, online and off

If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online. Talk to your teen about communicating respectfully, protecting personal information, acting with integrity, reporting harmful behavior and thinking before posting.

If your child is experiencing cyberbullying or other unwanted communication online, guide them to:

1. Avoid responding or retaliating. Doing so gives that person more of a platform to continue sharing harmful communication.

2. Block the bully using the app, website or device's blocking features to prevent further contact.

3. Save the evidence as screenshots or screen recordings.

4. Report it to the app or website so they can review the user's profile and take appropriate action.

5. Tell a trusted adult to discuss what led to the scenario and any questions they might have following the incident.
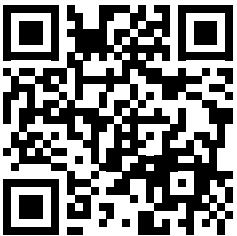
Helping teens understand and avoid online risk starts with awareness and strong support at home.

To learn more about how you and your teen can navigate technology and the evolution of online security risk, visit **www.coxmobilesafety.com** or scan the QR code.

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5 Tips to Keep **Senior Loved Ones Safe Online**

Featuring insights from Cox Mobile's 2025 Connecting the Digital Dots Survey and resources from Common Sense Media

As online threats become more advanced, families are stepping up to protect their aging loved ones online. However, this protection doesn't come without its own stressors.

According to a recent survey from Cox Mobile, **86%** of the sandwich generation — those caring for their children and aging parents — say that managing online safety for both their parents and children adds stress to their lives. This concern is justified, as **40%** of seniors have reported facing cybersecurity threats over the past 12 months.

Here are some ways you can help your aging loved ones have a safer digital experience.

Did you know?

Internet providers and device manufacturers have safety and security features built into their products. These can include malicious activity screening, parental controls, user-friendly modes, remote monitoring options and more.

1. Protect your personal information

Sharing private information or enabling location services on devices can put users, especially seniors, at risk by revealing more than intended. Even small details, like a photo with a visible street sign, can be pieced together to uncover personal information, potentially leading to privacy breaches and scams.

Consider talking with your parents or older loved ones about the importance of not over-sharing online and limiting location-sharing services on their devices.

2. Implement safe practices

Here's how your aging loved ones can limit their digital safety risks:

- When visiting a website, verify the URL and confirm it begins with "HTTPS" before interacting with the page.

- Double-check the privacy and sharing settings on apps and websites to make sure personal information is protected.

- Not everyone online is who they claim to be. When chatting with people online, encourage your aging loved ones not to share any personal information unless they have verified who that person is and that they are trusted.

- **It's better to be safe than sorry.** When in doubt, ask for a second opinion, whether that's a more digitally-savvy friend, family member or grandchild.

3. Triple-check passwords

A password alone isn't enough to stay safe online.
Advise your parents and aging loved ones to use strong, unique passwords and turn on two-factor authentication for extra protection.

In addition, sharing passwords can lead to identity theft, account lockouts, or unauthorized purchases. Encourage your parents and loved ones to treat passwords like house keys: private and secure.

4. Think before you prompt

While generative AI can be helpful, it's not always accurate and can sometimes spread misinformation. This is especially important for seniors to understand, as they may be unknowingly trusting AI-generated content that hasn't been fact-checked.

AI tools can also occasionally produce inappropriate or harmful content. That's why it is important to emphasize to your parents and senior loved ones to approach AI with caution, avoid entering sensitive data, and verify information through trusted sources.

5. Consider your mental health

Your parents or senior loved ones' mental health matters, and it's important to understand how online activity can impact it, especially since older adults may be more vulnerable to isolation or misinformation.

Constant exposure to negative news, scams, or even social comparison can lead to stress, anxiety, and confusion.

Encouraging your parents or senior loved ones to take a break from screens, verify those they're talking to, engage in positive online spaces, and talk openly about how they're feeling can make a big difference.
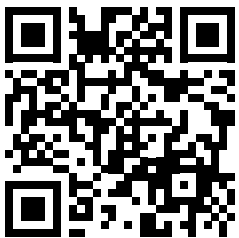
Help keep your loved ones safe online with regular check-ins and reminders of digital safety best practices.

To learn more about navigating technology and evolution of online security risk, visit **www.coxmobilesafety.com** or scan the QR code.

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