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Virus Prevention Tips

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Virus outbreaks are rising, says Sophos plc. The number of new viruses released on the Internet hit a 2-1/2-year high last month. Sophos plc found a total of 959 new viruses on the Internet in May, the highest number since December 2001.

With virus outbreaks on the rise, it's even more critical we understand how to protect ourselves from these malicious attacks.

Below is a list of 10 ways that will help protect and prevent viruses from infecting your computer.

1. **Use a hardware firewall system** - This would include a router and personal firewall software. Utilizing a firewall system keeps your computer or home network separate from the Internet and creates filters to block unsuspecting virus threats.
2. **Keep your Operating System Updated** - PC/Window users use Microsoft's Windows Update feature. Configure your system to automatically download the latest updates.
3. **Install Antivirus protection software** – Purchase and install immediately to all of your computers.
4. **Update your virus protection software** – Configure your antivirus software to automatically download any new protection files as soon as they become available. Don't rely on manual configuration – you may be too late.
5. **Run antivirus protection software regularly** – Setup a time (usually at night) to have your antivirus program automatically run a full system scan.
6. **Stay current** – Be aware of the latest virus threats that are out there. By staying current, you'll be able to recognize a threat more accurately and take action more promptly. Subscribe to an antivirus newsletter. Trend Micro has a very detailed report that is generated daily.
7. **Do not open any attachments you are unsure of** – Most viruses come through email. When in doubt delete. Remember some recipients may not even know they're sending you a virus. You have to be one step ahead of the game.
8. **Scan all of your email** - Make sure your antivirus protection software is configured to scan all incoming and outgoing email.
9. **Back up your files on a regular basis** - If a virus destroys your files, at least you can replace them with your back-up copy. You should store your backup copy in a separate location from your work files, one that is preferably not on your computer.
10. **Disable the email preview pane** - Some email viruses are capable of automatically executing as soon as they appear in the Preview Pane. Disable it.

Prevention is how we'll win this war. Utilizing these tips will greatly reduce your odds of contracting a virus.

For more tips and suggestions, visit Trend Micro, Symantec and McAfee. Visit CNet, ZDnet, PC Magazine, PC World and Microsoft for more information also.