

Safety Tips

Online dating is a great way to meet a new partner or find romance. But don't let your quest for love stop you from being cyber secure. Below are some steps you can take to increase your safety when interacting with others through online dating apps and services—whether you are interacting virtually or in person. Like any safety tips, they are not a guarantee, but they may help you feel more secure.

When Connecting Online

- **Never Send Money or Share Financial Information**

It's understandable how people can become victims in online dating scams. Cyber criminals are expert at creating fake profiles, then building trust and rapport with the people they're targeting.

That's why, for victims, online dating scams can be so hard to spot. Victims are earnestly trying to build a relationship with the people they meet, which requires trusting the people they meet online.

The problem, though, is that cyber criminals aren't looking for love. They're looking to exploit your quest for romance so they can steal your money. There are a few ways to spot a scammer when online dating, but a request to send money is the reddest of red flags.

If someone you are chatting with asks you to send them money, stop talking to them and report it to us immediately. And, of course, don't ever send them money. If you do, they'll disappear once you receive it – leaving your bank and your heart broke.

- **Keep chatting on the dating website or app**

One tactic cyber criminals use is to move conversations off of online dating websites or apps. If a person you are chatting with online wants to move your chat over to email or instant messaging, be cautious. It's a red flag that the person you are chatting with might be a cyber criminal.

- **Protect Your Personal Information**

Never share personal information, such as your social security number, home or work address, or details about your daily routine (e.g., that you go to a certain gym every Monday) with people you don't know. If you are a parent, limit the information that you share about your children on your profile and in early communications. Avoid sharing details such as your children's names, where they go to school, or their ages or genders.

- **Be Wary of Long Distance and Overseas Relationships**

Watch out for scammers who claim to be from your country but stuck somewhere else, especially if they ask for financial help to return home. Be wary of anyone who will not meet in person or talk on a phone/video call—they may not be who they say they are. If someone is avoiding your questions or pushing for a serious relationship without meeting or getting to know you first — that’s a red flag.

- **Report All Suspicious and Offensive Behavior**

You can block and report another user if you feel their profile is suspicious or if they have acted inappropriately toward you. This can often be done anonymously before or after you’ve matched. As with any personal interaction, it is always possible for people to misrepresent themselves. Trust your instincts about whether you feel someone is representing themselves truthfully or not.

The list below offers a few examples of some common stories or suspicious behaviors scammers may use to build trust and sympathy so they can manipulate another user in an unhealthy way.

- Asks for financial assistance in any way, often because of a sudden personal crisis
- Claims to be from Canada but is currently living, working, or traveling abroad
- Claims to be recently widowed with children
- Disappears suddenly from the site then reappears under a different name
- Gives vague answers to specific questions
- Overly complimentary and romantic too early in your communication
- Pressures you to provide your phone number or talk outside the dating app or site
- Requests your home or work address under the guise of sending flowers or gifts
- Tells inconsistent or grandiose stories
- Uses disjointed language and grammar, but has a high level of education

Examples of user behavior you may want to report can include:

- Requests financial assistance
- Requests photographs
- Is a minor
- Sends harassing or offensive messages
- Attempts to threaten or intimidate you in any way
- Seems to have created a fake profile
- Tries to sell you products or services

Be sure to pick a strong password, and always be careful when logging into your account from a public or shared computer. TwoHearts will never send you an email asking for your username and password information — if you receive an email asking for account information, report it immediately.

When Meeting in Person

- **Don't Be In A Rush**

Take your time and get to know the other person before agreeing to meet or chat off TwoHearts. Don't be afraid to ask questions to screen for any red flags or personal dealbreakers. Once you have matched with a potential date and chatted, consider scheduling a video chat with them before meeting up in person for the first time.

- **Meet in a Public Place and Stay in Public**

Meet for the first few times in a populated, public place — avoid meeting someone you don't know well yet in your home, apartment, or workplace. If your date pressures you to go to a private location, end the date.

- **Tell Friends and Family About Your Plans**

take a screenshot of your date's profile and send it to a friend. Let at least one friend know where and when you plan to go on your date. If you continue your date in another place you hadn't planned on, text a friend to let them know your new location. It may also be helpful to arrange to text or call a friend partway through the date or when you get home to check in.

- **Don't rely on your date for transportation**

We want you to be in control of how you get to and from your date so that you can leave whenever you want. If you're driving yourself, it's a good idea to have a backup plan such as a ride-share app or a friend to pick you up. Even if the person you're meeting volunteers to pick you up, avoid getting into a vehicle with someone you don't know and trust, especially if it's the first meeting.

- **Know Your Limits**

Be aware of the effects of drugs or alcohol on you specifically — they can impair your judgment and your alertness. If your date tries to pressure you to use drugs or drink more than you're comfortable with, hold your ground and end the date.

- **Don't Leave Drinks or Personal Items Unattended**

Know where your drink comes from and know where it is at all times — only accept drinks poured or served directly from the bartender or server. Many substances that are slipped into drinks to facilitate sexual assault are odorless, colorless, and tasteless. Also, keep your phone, purse, wallet, and anything containing personal information on you at all times.

- **Trust your instincts.**

If you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts and feel free to leave a date or cut off communication with whoever is making you feel unsafe. Do not worry about feeling rude—your safety is most important, and your date should understand that.