CYBERFIT FAMILY

Family Cybersecurity Awareness

Align your family's cyber fitness to their health fitness.

Keep Your Family Cyberfit in Cyberspace

The Military Health System and the Defense Health Agency emphasize the value of helping patients of all ages to protect themselves online and reducing their risk of becoming victims of cybercrimes.

What is cyberspace?
It is anything that is related to the internet.

What are some of the advantages of the internet?
The internet can be used for social interaction, entertainment, education, business and daily activities.

Is cyberspace safe?
Crimes are committed in cyberspace just like in real life. Adults, teenagers and children need to understand the risks of working and playing in cyberspace and how to protect themselves.

How often do children use the internet?
Youths from 8 to 18 years-old spend an average of 7.5 hours online daily.

What is cyberbullying?
It is any type of harassment that occurs online from e-mails and websites to text messages.

Who are cyber predators?
They are people who search the internet for anyone they can exploit or harm.

Can the internet affect my children's health?
Kids and adolescents can suffer from adverse health conditions when victimized through online theft, exploitation and cyberbullying. Teach your kids how they can protect themselves against these threats.

Can parents' military readiness be affected by a cyber breach?
A cyberspace threat or breach received by one family member can affect the health and well-being of the entire family and impact the parents' military readiness.

What can I do to keep my children cyberfit in cyberspace?
Parents should discuss safe online behavior with their kids and teenagers openly and regularly.

Cyber Tips for Parents

Develop cyber awareness with your family

- The best way to keep your kids safe online is to have frequent and honest conversations with them.
- Start talking to your kids when they are young and keep up the conversation through their teens.
- Help your entire family understand that internet safety is a daily priority for their protection.

Protect information and identity when in cyberspace

- Teach your kids how to protect their information when going online and using mobile devices.
- Create strong passwords with letters, numbers and symbols. Change them often. Never share them. Connect to the internet only when it's needed and disconnect when finished.
- Work with your child to create a good screen name that is not their real name.
- Do not give out personal information. This includes name, family members' names, address, phone number, birthdates and personal identifiers such as height, weight, school, grade and teachers.
- Don't offer the name and location of favorite places such as playgrounds, theaters and restaurants.

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Secure computers and mobile devices to prevent theft and unauthorized access

- Teach your kids to never leave computers and mobile devices such as cell phones unattended.
- Show your children how to lock computers and mobile devices when not in use. Use strong PINS and passwords to unlock them for their use only.
- Use trusted virus and malware protection software on all your family's devices.

Know the security risks of internet-connected, interactive smart toys

- Closely monitor your children's activity with smart toys such as conversations and voice recordings.
- Ensure the toy is turned off, particularly those with microphones and cameras, when not in use.
- Use strong login passwords with letters, numbers, and special characters for user accounts.
- Provide only what is minimally required when inputting information for user accounts.

Share social media tips with your kids

- Talk to your kids about thinking carefully before posting anything on the internet that they don't want shared. Once it's in cyberspace it's there forever. They can't make it disappear.
- Know what your kids are doing in cyberspace. Monitor their online activity and discuss it with them.
- Use privacy settings to restrict who can access and post on your child's profile.
- Keep strangers away and consider limiting your children's online "friends" to people they know.
- Review your children's friends lists and check their networking sites to see what they're posting.
- Encourage your children to think about the language they use online and the images they post.
- Inform your kids their online postings today could affect them later. Many others could be viewing their posts such as employers, college admissions officers, coaches, teachers and the police.

Don't let your family be phishing victims

- Beware of identity thieves who trick you into sharing personal information through e-mail scams.
- Don't reply to e-mails or texts that request personal information. They are often disguised as urgent and coming from an official organization such as a school.
- Don't open attachments or click on links in e-mails from an unknown source. One click can be enough to install and run malicious software on your computer.

Using Public Wi-Fi? Use Caution.

- Be careful when using public Wi-Fi sites.
- Make sure your device isn't set to automatically connect to Wi-Fi.
- Before you connect to any public Wi-Fi hotspot, confirm the name of the network and exact login procedures to ensure that the network is legitimate.
- Only connect when needed.

Don't tolerate cyberbullying

- Invite your kids to tell you if anything they see online threatens or hurts them.
- Contact the police if you fear for your child's or family's safety.
- Watch for the signs. Children who abruptly have no interest in going online may be cyberbully victims. Block or delete the cyberbully. Do not engage with them or forward their messages.
- Teach your family to treat others like they want to be treated. Don't let them be the cyberbully.

Avoid sexting and discourage cyber predators

- Talk to your family about the importance of avoiding sex talk online. If they don't talk about sex online, they will discourage contact with cyber predators.
- Convey to your kids that if they are contacted by strangers online they should ignore or block them.