

Staying Safe Online:

Internet Safety & AI Basics



BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION
WATERLOO WELLINGTON

Sources of risk online

We are leading increasingly online lives, so it is more important than ever to be careful when using the internet and AI. Knowing how to stay safe can help protect you from:

- Scams and frauds, identity theft
- Misinformation
- Privacy concerns

Common features and types of scams

Features	Types
Uninvited	Grandparent scams
Urgent	Advance fee scams
High reward, low risk	Romance scams
Pay first	Account info updates
“Not a big deal”	Fake job ads
Spelling, grammar errors	Tech support scams

Privacy tips

If you are thinking of sharing information online (posting on Facebook, YouTube, etc.), try not to overshare on things like addresses, travel plans, or health info.

Every app on your phone/tablet/computer may request access to certain permissions, such as your camera or your location. Make sure you are aware of what it is asking for and why, and only allow things it needs to function.

When making passwords, make sure they are strong: around 10-12 characters, a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and symbols, and avoid using personal details or common passwords. If possible, avoid reusing passwords and try password management apps. If you have the option to use two-step verification, use it!

AI Basics

Artificial intelligence, or AI, is the ability for computer programs to “think” like people, using advanced skills such as problem-solving, creativity, memory, and more. It has strong pattern recognition and can take many forms, such as chat bots (like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, or Microsoft Copilot), voice assistants, or add-ons to internet searches.

AI can be a very useful tool, providing in-depth information on a wide range of topics that is personalized to your needs, but be aware that there *are* risks:

- Fake information or “hallucinations” – make sure to double-check the information yourself
- “Deepfakes” or voice scams, where certain individuals are impersonated by AI
- Over-reliance on AI – make sure you are still actively thinking and making your own decisions!

Useful tips

- Stop and think before clicking
- Ask for help: friends/family, your bank or financial advisor, government resources, or residence staff
- When in doubt, exercise extra caution
- Learn about scams and AI to stay in the know
- **Report scams to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre: 1-888-495-8501**