

# ONLINE SAFETY BASICS

## Shopping Online

It's important to take steps to protect yourself when shopping online.

From the convenience of making purchases at your fingertips and next-day delivery to getting great deals and the endless catalogue of purchasable items, online shopping has only grown in popularity. While the increased availability of online shopping is convenient, it also makes it more lucrative for scammers to trick buyers into paying for goods they won't receive or obtain their personal information for financial gain. So, what can you do about it?

Being a safe and secure shopper starts with STOP. THINK. CONNECT.™: Take security precautions, think about the consequences of your actions online and enjoy the conveniences of technology with peace of mind while you shop online.

### Online Shopping Tips

- **Conduct research:** When using a new website for purchases, read reviews and see if other consumers have had a positive or negative experience with the site.
- **When in doubt, throw it out:** Links in emails, posts and texts are often how cybercriminals try to steal your information or infect your devices.
- **Personal information is like money: value it and protect it:** When making a purchase online, be alert to the kinds of information being collected to complete the transaction. Make sure you think it is necessary for the vendor to request that information. Remember, you only need to fill out required fields at checkout.
- **Use safe payment options:** Credit cards are generally the safest option because they allow buyers to seek a credit from the issuer if the product isn't delivered or isn't what was ordered.
- **Don't be disappointed:** Read return policies and other website information so you know what to expect if the purchase doesn't go as planned.
- **Protect your \$\$:** When shopping, check to be sure the site is security enabled. Look for web addresses with https:// indicating extra measures to help secure your information.

### Shopping on the Go

- **Now you see me, now you don't:** Some stores and other locations look for devices with WiFi or Bluetooth turned on to track your movements while you are within range. Disable WiFi and bluetooth when not in use.
- **Get savvy about WiFi hotspots:** Limit the type of business you conduct over open public WiFi connections, including logging in to key accounts like email and banking. Adjust the security settings on your device to limit who can access your phone.

Find more information at <https://www.staysafeonline.org>