

## COUGH MEDICINE FOR YOUR COMPUTER

Get the basics on computer viruses

### PART 1

**WHAT IS A COMPUTER VIRUS?** Computer viruses are software programs designed to interfere with computer operation deliberately. They record, corrupt, or delete data; they spread themselves to other computers through local networks and the Internet, often slowing data flow down and causing other problems as a result. Just as human viruses range in severity from the 24-hour flu to the Ebola virus, computer viruses range from the mildly annoying to the downright destructive. The good news is that with an ounce of prevention and a little knowledge, you are less likely to fall victim to computer viruses, and you can diminish the impact if you get one.

**HOW VIRUSES WORK?** Basic viruses typically rely on unwary computer users to inadvertently share or send them. Some viruses that are more sophisticated, such as worms, can replicate and send themselves automatically to other computers by controlling other software programs, such as an e-mail like yahoo, G mail, and outlook or instance messaging application. Although it's good to be aware of these different types of viruses and how they work, what is most important is that you keep your computer software current with the latest updates and antivirus tools, stay informed about recent threats, and that you follow a few basic rules when surfing the Internet, downloading files, and opening e-mail attachments. To learn more about e-mail attachments and phishing, please read article "Recognizing Phishing e-mails".

**Tip:** Beware of messages warning you that you to buy the anti-virus software, while at the same time it tells you have a large number of infections and the only way to get them off is to purchase this software. If an anti-virus program is really invasive and try's to take control over your desktop then it is a virus and will cause you more problems if not taken care of immediately.

**Trojan horse:**

A program that appears to be useful or harmless but that contains hidden code designed to exploit or damage to users through e-mail messages or misrepresentation of a program.

**Worm:**

Self-propagating malicious code that can automatically distribute itself from one computer to another through network connections. A worm can harm networks, local resources, or system wide computers.

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