Stay Safe When You Surf

Would you ever just walk up to a stranger on the street and tell them your name, age, address or other personal information? Probably not! But that's just what happens sometimes when you're online. Through social media and online gaming, you could be communicating with complete strangers, some of whom won't be honest with you about who they really are and what they really want – until it could be too late.

Giving the wrong information to the wrong person could lead to identity theft.

Depending on what information leaks out, it could affect everything from your and your parents' financial accounts to your personal safety. If a thief has the right information, they could open a credit card or loan in your name. If you're not careful, you could own a car or home and not even know it!

Take a look at our online safety tips to see how you can protect yourself when you're surfing online.

Online Safety Tips for Teens

We're sure you've already been told, probably many times, about staying safe online. The following tips are a refresher to remind you what you should and shouldn't do when you're online:

- **Personal Info** – Keep your personal information personal. Don't share it without your parents' permission. This includes your last name, home address, school name or phone number.

- **Screen Names** – When creating a screen name, keep personal information like your last name or date of birth out of it.

- **Passwords** – Don't share your password with anyone but your parents. Make sure each one is unique. And if you're using a public computer, like at the library, make sure you log out of your accounts before you walk away.

- **Photos** – Don't post photos or videos online without asking your parents first.

- **Online Friends** – Sure, that new online friend may seem nice. But sometimes people aren't who they say they are. Don't agree to meet an online friend unless you have your parents' permission.

- **Online Shopping** – Don't buy anything online without talking to your parents first. You may be tempted to click on those online ads offering free things or telling you that you've won a prize – don't do it!

- **Downloading** – It's hard to pass up a "free" app, but always talk to your parents before you open an email attachment or download anything. Sometimes viruses come with those free offers.

To find out more about online safety and how to protect yourself, visit the Federal Trade Commission website at **http://www.ftc.gov**.