

Viruses - I Think I might be infected

Viruses! Basically anything running an operating system can get infected with one. Both Mac's and PC's are infected on a daily basis. Even your smartphone can get infected! The myth that Mac's can't get viruses has been busted repeatedly in my office over the years. But what can you do to protect yourself from those threats? In this document, we will go over some of the steps to make sure you're being protects and what to do if you get infected.

1. First and foremost, it is important to make sure you have a top quality, highly rated Internet Security program. Not all programs are the same, and plain anti-virus programs just don't do enough these days. There are lots of advocates out there who claim free programs do just as good a job as the paid ones, if not better. As a technician who removes viruses from computers on a daily basis, I find that statement untrue. All the systems that come in infected either have A) some sort of free version, B) some sort of inferior rated version, or C) nothing at all. I always recommend Norton Internet Security to my customers because, it is highly rated and the most effective at stopping attacks and infections.
2. There is such thing as "Too Much of a Good Thing!" Being protected is one thing, but being over-protected can have unwanted effects. For example: Running Norton Internet Security 2011 and also 1 other anti-malware program like spybot is fine... however, having something like Webroot Spysweeper, Norton, Stopzilla, and Malwarebytes all at the same time, will not be effective, and may cause glitches or keep each other from running properly.
3. Have you been surfing the web and a strange popup box that looks like it's from the windows OS come up front saying something like: "STOP YOU'RE INFECT WITH 1200 VIRUSES" Or perhaps a screen from internet explorer says: "YOU MIGHT BE INFECTED, CLICK HERE FOR A SCAN" If this has happened to you, and you clicked on those boxes either to close or open, you more than likely have infected yourself with something like: "WINDOWS XP-ANTIVIRUS" or "ANTIVIRUS PRO" or something similar to that. If this has not happened to you yet, then here is a little hint. Don't click on ANY of the boxes or screen... one your windows keyboard push CTRL+ALT+DEL... Open windows task manager... click on the processes tab... end process on all iexplorer.exe listings. Then shutdown your computer and restart. If you're still experiencing odd things, shut down the computer at once, and bring it into your local repair shop to get checked out.

In all cases of virus infection, it is of your utmost importance to immediately stop use of your computer and take it to your local computer repair shop. When you take it to your local shop, be sure to ask A LOT of questions about their processes or detecting and removing viruses. Ask about data loss, and if you might potentially lose any data. Ask the technicians their success rate in removing viruses without reloading. Ask them what percentage of computers they get in that are infected get reloaded. A complete system reload should be the LAST resort when all other options have been exhausted.

The expectation for turnaround times on virus removals can vary... most take about 48 – 72 hours. Very rarely does it take more than a week, but it is not uncommon for it to take that long. Any technician that says they can remove your virus in a couple hours or a day, is more than likely not doing a thorough job, and not double checking the system for re-infections. Additionally if a technician says they can come onsite to remove a virus will more than likely be there for a long time, charge you a lot, and probably not completely clean it off.