



# *Tips for parents dealing with viral “monsters” on the Internet*



## ***Explain to them it’s not real***

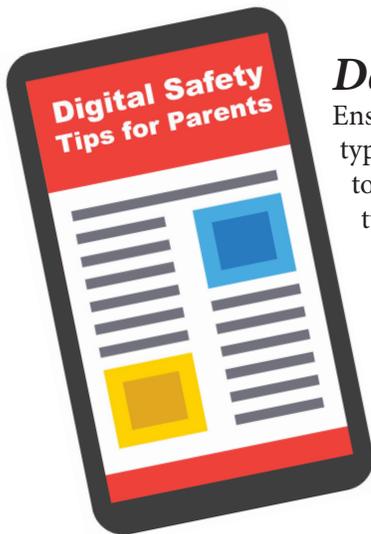
Just like any urban legend or horror story, the concept can be frightening and upsetting for young people. While this may seem obvious, it is important for you to explain to your child that “viral monsters” and other Internet based “boogeymen” cannot directly harm them. Also, tell your child to not go openly searching for this content online, often this is used as clickbait and can expose their devices to malicious software.

## ***Be involved***

It is important for you, as a parent or caregiver, to be present while your children are online. This will give you a greater understanding of what they are doing on their devices, as well as providing you with the opportunity to discuss, support and stop certain activities that your child may be involved. It is also important to recognize any changes in your child’s behavior.

## ***Talk regularly with your child about safe use of the Internet***

As well as monitoring your child’s activity, it is important for you to discuss it with them too. Not only will this give you an understanding of their online actions, but those honest and frequent conversations will encourage your child to feel confident to discuss issues and concerns they may have shared with the online world.



## ***Device settings & parental controls***

Ensure that you set up parental controls for your devices at home. This will help to restrict the types of content that your child can view, as well as help you to monitor their activity. In addition to this, be aware of your personal device and account settings. For example, on YouTube you can turn off “suggested auto-play” on videos to stop your child from viewing content that they have not directly selected.

## ***Peer pressure***

Trends and viral challenges can be tempting for children to take part in; no matter how dangerous or scary they seem. Make sure you talk to your child about how they shouldn’t let peer pressure influence them to do anything they are not comfortable with, online or offline. If they are unsure, encourage them to talk to you or another trusted adult.

## ***Report & block***

You can’t always rely on parental controls to block inappropriate content. People find ways around the algorithm platform in order to share and promote this type of material. Report any material you deem to be inappropriate as soon as you come across it. Encourage your child to record/screenshot any content they feel could be malicious to provide evidence.

## ***Real or hoax?***

As a parent it is natural to feel worried about certain things you see on line that may be harmful to your child. However, not everything you see online is true. Check the validity of the source and be aware of what you share, as it may only spread false information.