



SPYWARE REMOVAL TIPS

Don't let spyware render your computer unuseable!!

**Follow DIGITAL PATHWAYS Spyware Removal Tips
to keep your computer healthy and efficient!**

Strictly defined, **spyware** consists of software that gathers and reports information about a computer user without the user's knowledge or consent. More broadly, the term *spyware* can refer to a wide range of related malware products which fall outside the strict definition of spyware. These products perform many different functions, including the delivery of unrequested advertising (pop-up ads in particular), harvesting private information, re-routing page requests to illegally claim commercial site referral fees, and installing stealth phone dialers.

This document will assist in the removal of such programs from your computer, recouping valuable system resources as well as protecting sensitive information. It is important to understand that, while these steps will remove a substantial number of spyware programs, new programs are being written every day and there are some particularly insidious ones which dictate manual deletion from the system to resolve the problem. If you find, after following the steps below, that you still have a problem, call Digital Pathways for further advice.

Preparation:

Tools to download:

- Ad-Aware
- Spybot
- Avast Antivirus software (if none is loaded). If Antivirus software is present on the machine, ensure that virus definitions are up-to-date. If they are not, **update the subscription**.

Download and Install Spybot Search and Destroy

Download and install Ad-Aware

Download and install Avast (**only if no other antivirus software is loaded**)

Do not run them at this time

Tip! A search on <http://www.google.com> for these tools will provide available download sites!

Use msconfig on Windows XP and Windows 9X systems and select Diagnostic startup (load basic devices and services). To do this:

- Click on Start Button
- Click on Run
- In the box type: msconfig
- Click on OK

Tip! This is helpful if spyware infestation will not allow you to load the tools. This step may enable the installation of the tools, where a normal startup won't!

Following these steps can be dangerous and could result in loss of data be sure to have a backup of your system before starting any operations.

1. Disconnect the system from the internet
 - unplug Ethernet connection if available
 - disconnect phone line
 - disconnect usb networking equipment

2. Boot in safe mode. Safe mode is the Windows diagnostics mode. When you start the computer in Safe mode, only the specific components that are needed to run the operating system are loaded. Safe mode also loads a standard video driver at a low resolution. Due to the low resolution, your programs and the Windows desktop may look different than usual and the desktop icons may have moved to different locations on the desktop.

To do this, press F8 during boot of OS. When you see the Safe Mode startup menu, select Safe Mode. If the menu does not appear and the PC goes directly into Windows, shut down the machine and turn it on again. When the black screen appears, start tapping the F8 key, until the menu appears.

3. Delete all files and directories under the following directories (depends on OS)
 - Windows 98
c:\windows\temp
 - Windows 2000
c:\winnt\temp
(do this for all users on the system)
c:\documents and settings\[userid]\local settings\temp
c:\documents and settings\[userid]\local settings\temporary Internet Files
 - Windows XP
c:\windows\temp
c:\documents and settings\[userid]\local settings\temp
c:\documents and settings\[userid]\local settings\temporary Internet Files

4. Boot in safe mode, press F8 during boot of OS

5. Run a virus scan

6. Run Spybot Search and Destroy (this wizard only runs the first time its run)

- Follow prompts to:
 - Backup the registry
 - Immunize the system
 - Run SDhelper and Teatimer
 - Download all updates
 - Run scan
 - Take note of any files that were not fixed because they were open
 - If prompted to run on startup select "Yes" and reboot

7. Run Ad-Aware

- Download latest updates
- Run a scan
- Select Fix problems

****Note: These two programs need to be run for each user on the system!!

Tip! Spyware scans may have to be run multiple times to remove everything.