

This guide is designed to inform users of the risks and symptoms of malware infection on PCs, as well as prevention and removal methods.

## WHAT IS MALWARE?

Malware is a broad spectrum of malicious software that can be installed on your computer without your knowledge. It includes software called Trojans designed to allow outsiders access to your PC, fake anti-virus programs, tracking cookies that report browsing habits to advertisers, and browser hijacks that redirect web searches and links to unwanted websites. Malware is often designed to slip through commercial anti-virus programs, and may exploit vulnerabilities of software installed on your computer.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A MALWARE INFECTION?

- Pop-up ads, specifically those that appear when you are not browsing the internet.
- A significant change in system performance, particularly with regard to web browsing.
- “Anti-virus” scans that pop up without prompting and encourage purchase of software.
- A web search or link takes you to an unwanted location repeatedly.
- New toolbars appear in your browser without warning.
- Your homepage changed without your knowledge to an untrustworthy website.
- Microsoft System Center EndPoint Protection, our campus-wide anti-virus program, may warn about infections.

## HOW CAN I PREVENT MALWARE?

- Do not click on any pop-up that warns about an infection unless it is from Microsoft System Center EndPoint Protection.
- Do not click on banner ads or pop-ups while browsing the web, especially those that advertise anti-virus or anti-spyware.
- Do not open an email from an unknown source. Avoid links or attachments you do not recognize.
- Ensure Windows is updated regularly by leaving your PC on overnight on Patch Wednesday.
- Allow any legitimate software, such as Java or Adobe, which requests an update to do so.
- Avoid installation of third party programs such as toolbars, games, peer-to-peer sharing utilities, and screensavers.

## WHAT CAN I DO IF I THINK MY COMPUTER IS AFFECTED?

- Download, install, and update Malwarebytes Anti-Malware from <http://www.malwarebytes.org/> Run a Full scan. Though this is unlikely to remove the infection in its entirety, it can temporarily set the infection back, preventing it from worsening, and allowing you to continue working.
- Call the IT Help Desk at 410-677-5454 or x75454 so a technician can address the problem.