

A computer virus is a program intended to destroy systems by corrupting data. Diskettes, networks, and modem transfers can carry viruses. When files from an infected computer are used on another system, the virus spreads.

Problems might occur as soon as the virus invades the system, or the virus might wait for a preset time before becoming active.

Prevention

Viruses spread through contact with other systems via diskette, modems, and networks. To protect your system:

- Use virus-checking software to scan new diskettes and new files before copying or using them.
- Before making backup copies, insert a write-protected, bootable system diskette into the diskette drive. Reset the system by turning off the computer, waiting at least 30 seconds, and then turning on the computer. Do not press CTRL+ALT+DEL to reset.
- Use only write-protected master diskettes to make backup copies.
- Always keep a write-protected copy of a startup diskette. If a virus infects your hard drive, you can still start up with this diskette.
- Keep copies of files on write-protected diskettes.
- Be wary of copied or pirated software.
- Do not assume that legitimate, packaged software is free of viruses.
- Contact your computer dealer or your public library for more information concerning protection against viruses.

Diagnosis

Virus symptoms can mimic symptoms of simpler hardware problems, such as those caused by bad cable connections or poor memory chip contacts. Follow earlier troubleshooting suggestions before seeking repairs. If you think your computer has a virus, use current virus-scanning programs that can recognize recent viruses.