

# Safe online dating tips



Online dating has become an exciting way for older people in Australia to connect. Whether you're looking for friendship or romance, the internet can help you meet people.

Still, prioritising your safety is essential.

Here's how you can navigate the world of online dating with confidence.



## Choosing the right platform

Choose dating platforms with good reputations, especially those tailored to older adults. For example, eHarmony has a good reputation among singles over 50.

See what your peers have to say. Look for positive reviews from other users.

Make sure the platform includes safety features, such as profile verification. And don't forget to read through the privacy policies.

## Create a secure profile

Be careful of what information you share in your profile and messages.

Keep details like your full name, address, and phone number private until you trust the person.

Choose a username and profile photo that reflect your personality without revealing too many details.

## Communicating safely

Use the messaging platform provided by the dating site at first. This will be more secure than using standard messaging apps.

Set expectations early. Be clear and upfront about your intentions to avoid misunderstandings.

Take your time. Build trust gradually before sharing your personal details or identifying information.

## Meeting in person

Meet somewhere public for the first time, if you choose to meet in person.

Don't forget to tell someone before you go. Share your plans, including who you're meeting and where, with a friend or family member.

## Trust your instincts

If something feels off during your conversations, listen to your gut.

Be alert if the match seems too good to be true. It can be worth investigating this unease.

It's always acceptable to take a step back if you're feeling uncomfortable. You can let the other person know if you need time, space, or to end your communication.

## Protecting yourself from catfish and scams

A catfish is someone who creates a false online identity to trick you. They often ask for money or try to blackmail you with sensitive information.

Here are some tips for protecting yourself from catfish:

- Watch for red flags. Look for inconsistencies in their story or behaviour.
- Suggest a video call early to verify their identity.
- Never send money, even if someone claims it's an emergency.
- Learn how to report users on the platform if you suspect a scam.



# Using reverse image search

Verify profile pictures using these steps:

## On Desktop

1. Right-click the image and save it.
2. Go to Google Images, click the camera icon, and upload the saved picture.

## On Smartphone or tablet

1. Save the image or take a screenshot.
2. Go to your saved image in Google Photos or the Google app, tap the Google Lens icon (a small square with a dot inside), and search the image.

Google will search the internet for similar images. If the same picture appears on multiple profiles or sites, it's a sign to be cautious of the person.

## If you've been scammed

If you discover that your match isn't who they claimed to be, you're not alone. Romance scams are designed to be convincing, and they can happen to anyone. In fact, older people in Australia reported losses of \$3.5 million to romance scams from April to June 2024, according to the National Anti-Scam Centre.

Here's what to do if you suspect or know you've been targeted:

- Cut communication immediately. Stop talking with the scammer and report their profile to the dating platform.
- Contact your bank. If you've sent any money, let your bank know right away to stop further transactions.
- Secure your accounts. Change the passwords on any accounts where you may have shared details.
- Seek support. Confide in trusted friends or family for emotional support.

## Reach out, don't be ashamed

Remember, scammers rely on shame to keep victims silent. If you're feeling embarrassed or overwhelmed, now is the time to be kind to yourself and take steps to move forward.

Learn about finding mental health support [here](#).

You can also find more information about protecting yourself online and improving your cyber security [here](#).

## Be safe and have fun

Approach dating, whether online or in person, with an open mind and the goal of enjoying yourself. Relationships take time to develop. So, let your connections grow naturally.

Online dating can be a wonderful way to meet new people, but your safety should always come first. Stay vigilant, embrace the technology, and enjoy the journey of forming meaningful connections.

## More helpful information

If you need more information, get in touch with one of our helpful team on **1800 951 971**.

[Cyber.gov.au](https://www.cyber.gov.au) is provided by the Australian Cyber Security Centre. They provide practical steps to keep yourself and your family secure. These steps have been translated into different languages.

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