

Scams & online safety | Easy | 2 min read

A pop-up says my computer has a virus

A pop-up saying your computer has a virus, often with loud noises and a phone number, is almost always a scam. Real security warnings do not ask you to phone a number. It cannot be a real warning if it is on a website.

What not to do

- Do not call the number or click anything in the pop-up.
- Do not download or install anything it offers.
- Do not pay, or give out card details or passwords.
- Do not let anyone take remote control of your computer.

Step by step

1. If you can, close the page. Press Alt and F4 together on Windows, or Command and Q on a Mac, to close the browser.
2. If it will not close, press Ctrl, Shift and Esc to open **Task Manager** (Windows), select your browser and choose **End task**. On a Mac, press Option, Command and Esc, select the browser and choose **Force Quit**.
3. Open the browser again. If it offers to restore your previous pages, choose not to.
4. Run a scan with the security software already on your computer. On Windows, open **Settings**, then **Privacy & security**, then **Windows Security** (in Windows 10, **Update & Security**, then **Windows Security**), and choose **Virus & threat protection**.
5. Restart the computer. Do not switch off your security software.

If you already called or paid

- Stop all contact. Hang up if on the phone.
- If they have access to your computer, switch off Wi-Fi or unplug the network cable.
- Phone your bank at once using the number on your card if you gave card details or paid.
- Change passwords from a different, clean device.
- Report to Report Fraud at reportfraud.police.uk or on 0300 123 2040. In Scotland, call Police Scotland on 101.

When to get more help

Stop and ask for help if the pop-ups keep coming back, your browser has strange extensions, or anyone has had access to your computer. Tell us exactly what the pop-up said and what you did.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.