

# From DMs to Dating

## Safe Online Dating Tips for Teens

Almost all teens say they are online every day, but more than one third say they use social media "almost constantly."<sup>1</sup> Given the amount of time we spend online, the chances of finding people you like are high!

Use the tips below to safely take a relationship from DMs to dating!

### SCREENING

Did you know 50% of teens have made a move by following someone on social media?<sup>1</sup> If someone messages or follows you, take a minute to ask yourself: Are they really who they say they are? What can I find out about this person?

- Confirm their age. Photos and who they follow can give you a hint. Someone in high school probably follows organizations at their school and posts photos of school activities.
- Look to see if you have mutual friends and ask those people what they think about them.
- Ask a trusted adult if they think it's okay to respond.

**IF AN ADULT MESSAGES YOU,  
DO NOT RESPOND. BLOCK THEM  
AND TELL A TRUSTED ADULT!**

### TALKING

Did you know 40% of teens reported being approached by someone online who they believe was trying to manipulate them?<sup>2</sup> If you start talking with someone you met online, watch out for anything that doesn't feel right.

- Never share any personal information like your last name, school, or where you live.
- If someone's comments make you uncomfortable, block and report them and tell a trusted adult.
- Consider the images you are posting online and never share nude photos. If someone threatens to share nude photos of you, tell a trusted adult immediately.
- Make sure you turn off location sharing if you're talking on an app that can share location, like Snapchat.



## MEETING



Did you know 24% of teens who have ever dated first met a partner online?<sup>3</sup> Taking the convo from DMs to IRL can be exciting but always think about your safety first.

- Meet in a familiar public place and tell a trusted adult where you'll be.
- Have a transportation plan. Never rely on your date to pick you up or take you home.
- Before your date, set up a code word with a parent/caregiver or trusted adult and arrange a time for them to call you to check in. If you need to bail, use the code word so they know to come pick you up.

## DATING



Did you know 74% of teens say that social media helps them feel closer to their partner?<sup>3</sup> Staying connected online can be good for your relationship if done respectfully.

- Create boundaries for what you feel comfortable sharing about your relationship online.
- Respect your partner's time alone or with friends. It's cool to stay in touch, but don't expect them to be available 24/7.
- If your partner asks you to share your location, check in with your parent/caregiver first.
- Phones are private. Never share your passwords with your partner.



## RESOURCES

- Stop The Hurt: [Teen Dating in the Digital Age](#) Advice on digital safety for teens online.
- love is respect: [What is Digital Abuse?](#) Information on what digital dating abuse looks like.
- Family and Youth Services Bureau: [Being Tech-Smart – Online Safety Tips](#) General tips for staying safe online.
- Family and Youth Services Bureau: [Think Twice about Sexting](#) Information about what sexting is and why it is risky.
- FBI: [Sextortion—How We Can Help You](#) Information about this crime, how to prevent it, and how to get help if it happens to you.

This infographic was developed by RTI International and its subcontractor partners under contract #HHSP2332015000391 Task 3 with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau.

**Suggested Citation:** Tallant, J., & Wulah, A. (2024). *From DMs to dating: Safe online dating tips for teens*. Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau.

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