



## PREVENT SEXTING

### WHAT IS SEXTING?

"Sexting" usually refers to teens sharing nude photos via cell phone, but it's happening on other devices and the Web too. The practice can have serious legal and psychological consequences, so - teens should consider these tips developed by [ConnectSafely.org](http://ConnectSafely.org)!

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**It's illegal:** Don't take or send nude or sexually suggestive photos of yourself or anyone else. If you do, even if they're of you or you pass along someone else's - you could be charged with producing or distributing child pornography. If you keep them on your phone or computer you could be charged with possession. If they go to someone in another state (and that happens really easily), it's a federal felony.

**Other consequences:** Then there's the emotional (and reputation) damage that can come from having intimate photos of yourself go to a friend who can become an ex-friend and send it to everyone you know. Not only can they be sent around; they can be distributed and archived online for people to search for pretty much forever.

**Not just on phones:** Sexting can be done on any media-sharing device or technology - including email and the Web. Teens have been convicted for child porn distribution for emailing sexually explicit photos to each other.

**Many causes:** In some cases, kids are responding to peer pressure in a form of cyberbullying or pressure from a boyfriend or girlfriend (they break up, and sometimes those photos get sent around out of revenge). Sometimes it's impulsive behavior, flirting, or even blackmail. **It's always a bad idea.**

**The bottom line:** Stay alert when using digital media. People aren't always who they seem to be, even in real life, and sometimes they change and do mean things. Critical thinking about what we upload as well as download is the best protection.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET “SEXTED”

If a sexting photo arrives on your phone, **do not send it to anyone else** (that could be considered distribution of child pornography).

**Talk to a parent or trusted adult.** Tell them the full story so they know how to support you. And don't freak out if that adult decides to talk with the parents of others involved - that could be the best way to keep all of you from getting into serious trouble.

If the picture is from a friend or someone you know, then **someone needs to talk to that friend so he or she knows sexting is against the law.** You're actually doing the friend a big favor because of the serious trouble that can happen if the police get involved.