



Teen Sexting 411

What is it? Sending or receiving sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, usually between cell phones.

How common is it?

- Very. Nearly half of all teens report that they've received a sexually suggestive message from someone else,
- 2 out of 5 teens report that they've sent a sexually suggestive message,
- And 2 out of 10 teens report that they've sent or posted nude or semi nude pictures or videos of themselves.

Why all the Fuss? In some cases, sexting is illegal. If you forward a sexual picture of someone underage, you could face child pornography charges, go to jail, and have to register as a sex offender.

Common Technology Myths

- Nobody else can gain access to your private webpage.
- Deleting a picture or video from your webpage deletes it forever.
- Deleting a picture or video from your computer deletes it forever.
- Deleting a picture or video from your digital camera or phone deletes it forever.
- Broadcasting from your webcam is always private and never recorded.

Before Pushing Send

- ⦿ **Don't assume anything you send or post is going to remain private.** Your messages and images will get passed around, even if you think they won't.
- ⦿ **There is no changing your mind in cyberspace—anything you send or post will never truly go away.** Even if you delete something, there is no telling who has already copied it and posted it elsewhere. It is nearly impossible to control where your messages or photos will end up. That means potential employers, college recruiters, teachers, parents, friends, and enemies may be able to find your past posts, even after you delete them.
- ⦿ **Don't give in to peer pressure, even in cyberspace.** Many teens say that “pressure from guys” or “pressure from friends” is the reason that they send sexually suggestive messages or photos. It's easier to be more provocative or outgoing online, but whatever you write, post, or send will shape the real life impression that you're making on other. Don't say or do anything online that you wouldn't say or do in person.
- ⦿ **Consider the recipient's reaction.** Just because a message is meant to be fun doesn't mean the person will take it that way.
- ⦿ **Remember, nothing is truly anonymous.** Even if someone only knows you by your screen name, online profile, phone number or email address, they can probably find you if they try hard enough.

Tips for Teens

- ⦿ Never take images of yourself or post messages that you wouldn't want everyone—your classmates, teachers, family, or future employers—to see.
- ⦿ Report any nude pictures you receive on your cell phone to an adult you trust. Do not delete the message.