

# Malware - What it is, common signs, and how to remove it safely

Gridinsoft Help Center

## What it is

Malware is any software made to harm your device or data. It can steal passwords, lock your files, spy on activity, or hijack your browser. For a quick primer and examples, see our malware explainer.

## How it spreads

- Phishing emails and fake attachments
- "Free" repacks, cracks, and shady download sites
- Malicious ads and fake update prompts
- Exploits against outdated apps or plugins

## What you may notice

- Pop-ups, redirects, or a homepage you didn't set
- Slower performance, high CPU or fan noise when idle
- New toolbars, extensions, or programs you don't remember installing
- Security tools crash or won't update

## Remove it now

- Disconnect from the internet.
- Run a full anti-malware scan, reboot, then scan again.
- Remove unknown startup items, tasks, services, and extensions.
- From a clean device, change passwords and turn on MFA.
- Check bank and email accounts for unusual activity.

## Prevent it

- Install software only from official sources and avoid cracks.
- Keep your OS, browser, and apps updated.
- Use reputable EDR or anti-malware plus DNS/web filtering.
- Block macros by default and verify invoices or links out of band.
- Use a password manager and MFA on important accounts.