

A FREE RESOURCE FOR EVERY FAMILY

Protecting Your Home in the Digital Age

A parent's guide to family-safe internet — covering what filtering is, why it matters, the real harms of pornography, the dangers of AI and social media, warning signs to watch for, and how to get your home set up today.

"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

— Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

73%

of teens have encountered
explicit content online

12

average age of first
exposure to pornography

95%

of teens ages 13–17 use
social media

Free

every resource, always

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SECTION 1

What Is Family Internet Filtering?

We set up a network-level content filter on your home WiFi. This means every device that connects to your WiFi — phones, tablets, laptops, smart TVs, gaming consoles — is automatically protected from harmful content. No apps to install on each device. It just works.

How to explain it in one sentence

"We had our home internet professionally filtered so every device on our WiFi is protected from adult content and harmful websites — no app needed."

— What to tell friends and family

What the filter does

- Blocks pornographic and adult content websites
- Blocks known malware, phishing, and scam sites
- Blocks other categories you choose (gambling, drugs, etc.)
- Works on every device connected to your home WiFi
- Cannot be easily bypassed by kids or teens
- Managed through a secure dashboard with accountability

SECTION 2

Why This Matters: The Real Harms of Pornography

Pornography is not a harmless private habit. Research consistently shows it causes measurable damage to individuals, marriages, and children. Here's what the data says.

The Addiction

Pornography activates the same reward pathways in the brain as addictive substances. Over time, users develop tolerance — needing more extreme material to get the same response. This is not a willpower issue; it is a neurological pattern that rewires the brain's dopamine system.

"The relentless pursuit of pleasure leads to pain."

— Dr. Anna Lembke, Dopamine Nation (Stanford Addiction Medicine)

Key facts

- The average age of first exposure to pornography is 12 years old [1] [2]
- 93% of boys and 63% of girls are exposed before age 18 [2]
- Frequent use is linked to depression, anxiety, and social isolation [2] [3]
- It distorts expectations around relationships, intimacy, and consent [3]
- Early exposure increases likelihood of sexual risk-taking and relationship problems [2] [3]

The Impact on Marriage

Pornography use by a spouse is a significant predictor of marital dissatisfaction, emotional disconnection, and divorce. It creates a secret life that erodes trust and breeds shame — even when the using spouse believes it's "not a big deal."

What research shows

- Starting porn use nearly doubled the likelihood of divorce (6% to 11%) [4] [5]
- For women who began viewing, divorce probability tripled (6% to 18%) [4]
- It reduces emotional and physical intimacy in the relationship [6]
- Secrecy around use creates isolation and shame cycles [6] [7]

The Impact on Children

Children who encounter pornography — whether accidentally or through curiosity — are not equipped to process what they see. Early exposure is linked to anxiety, confusion about relationships, premature sexual behavior, and in some cases, acting out what they've viewed with other children. [2] [3]

SECTION 3

The New Threat: Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is advancing faster than most parents realize. While AI has legitimate uses, it has also created an entirely new category of digital danger for families — especially children and teens who are early adopters of new technology.

AI-Generated Explicit Content

AI tools can now generate realistic fake nude images of real people from a single clothed photo. This has already been used to target teens in schools — classmates creating fake explicit images of other students and sharing them. This is a form of sexual abuse, and it is happening in middle schools and high schools across the country.

● What parents need to know

- AI "undressing" tools are freely available online and easy for teens to find [9] [11]
- A single social media photo is enough to generate fake explicit images [11]
- 1 in 10 teens personally know someone targeted by deepfake nudes [9] [12]
- NCMEC reports of AI-generated CSAM soared from 4,700 (2023) to 440,000 (first half 2025) [10]
- These images can be used for bullying, blackmail, or distributed without consent [9]
- Even though the images are fake, the trauma to the victim is very real [9] [12]

AI Chatbots and Emotional Manipulation

Children and teens are increasingly forming emotional relationships with AI chatbots. Some chatbot platforms allow or even encourage romantic and sexual conversation with users — including minors. These tools can become a gateway to emotional dependency, isolation from real relationships, and exposure to inappropriate content.

● Risks of AI chatbot use by minors

- Chatbots can simulate romantic or intimate relationships with children [14] [15]
- Some platforms have no meaningful age verification [14]
- AI companions can replace real human connection and social development [14]
- Chatbots can be manipulated to bypass safety filters and produce harmful content [14]
- Children may share personal information, photos, or secrets with AI systems
- Multiple teen suicides have been linked to emotional dependency on AI chatbots [14] [15]

Deepfakes and Deception

AI can now clone a person's voice from a short audio clip and generate realistic video of people saying things they never said. Criminals are using this to impersonate family members in phone scams ("Mom, I'm in trouble, I need money"). Kids need to understand that seeing or hearing something digital does not mean it's real.

"The world now offers a full complement of digital drugs that didn't exist before... If you haven't met your drug of choice yet, it's coming soon to a website near you."

— Dr. Anna Lembke, Dopamine Nation

What parents can do about AI risks

- Talk to your kids about AI-generated content — they need to know it exists
- Explain that creating fake explicit images of anyone is abuse, and it's illegal
- Monitor what AI apps and chatbots your children are using
- Set a family rule: no AI companion or chatbot apps without parent approval
- Establish a family safe word for phone calls to verify identity
- Teach kids that anything they share with an AI system is not private
- Network-level filtering can block many AI image generators

SECTION 4

Social Media: What Parents Need to Know

Social media is the primary digital environment your children live in. It is designed by some of the smartest engineers in the world to be as addictive as possible. The U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory in 2023 calling social media a significant risk to youth mental health. [17] This is not a fringe opinion — it's the mainstream medical consensus.

"We have overprotected our children in the real world and underprotected them online."

— Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation* (2024)

The Mental Health Crisis

What the research shows

- Up to 95% of teens ages 13–17 use social media; a third use it "almost constantly" [17]
- Teens using social media 3+ hours/day face double the risk of depression and anxiety [18]
- Social media use is linked to poor sleep, body image issues, and low self-esteem [17]
- Cyberbullying follows kids home — there is no escape from it [17]
- Nearly 40% of children ages 8–12 already use social media [17]
- Algorithms actively push increasingly extreme content to keep users engaged [17]

The Predator Problem

Social media and messaging platforms are the primary tools predators use to contact and groom children. This is not hypothetical — it is the dominant pattern in child exploitation cases investigated by law enforcement today.

● How predators operate online

- They find children through public profiles, comments, and gaming platforms
- They build trust over weeks or months through private messaging
- They gradually introduce sexual topics and normalize boundary violations
- They isolate the child from parents ("don't tell your mom, she wouldn't understand")
- They request photos, video calls, or in-person meetings
- Platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, Discord, and TikTok are common contact points

The Addiction by Design

Social media apps are engineered using the same psychological principles as slot machines. Infinite scroll, push notifications, streaks, likes, and algorithmic feeds are all designed to maximize time on the app — not to benefit your child. When a product is free, your child's attention is the product being sold to

advertisers.

"Gen Z became the first generation in history to go through puberty with a portal in their pockets that called them away from the people nearby."

— Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation* (2024)

Signs of unhealthy social media use in your child

- Constantly checking their phone, anxious when separated from it
- Mood changes tied to social media interactions (likes, comments, followers)
- Sleep disruption — using phone late at night or first thing in the morning
- Withdrawal from family activities, in-person friendships, or hobbies
- Secrecy about who they're talking to or what apps they're using
- Comparing themselves negatively to others, body image concerns
- Declining grades or inability to focus

Practical steps for parents

- Delay social media as long as possible — many experts recommend age 16+
- No smartphones before high school; use a basic phone for calls and texts
- Keep devices in common areas — no phones or tablets in bedrooms at night
- Know your child's passwords and check their accounts regularly
- Follow your kids on every platform they use
- Talk openly and often about what they see and experience online
- Set screen time limits and enforce them consistently
- Model healthy phone habits yourself — kids are watching
- Use network filtering to block the worst platforms entirely if needed

SECTION 5

Warning Signs

Signs a spouse may be struggling

These signs don't prove anything on their own, but patterns are worth paying attention to:

- Increased secrecy with phone or laptop (hiding screens, new passwords)
- Staying up late alone — especially with devices
- Emotional withdrawal or decreased intimacy
- Irritability or defensiveness when asked about device use
- Browser history is always cleared or incognito mode is always on
- Unexplained charges or subscriptions
- Decreased interest in real-life intimacy

Signs a child or teen may have been exposed

- Using devices secretly or hiding what they're doing when you walk by
- Suddenly knowledgeable about sexual topics beyond their age
- Behavioral changes: anxiety, withdrawal, or acting out
- Inappropriate language or behavior with peers
- Resistance or strong reactions to new internet rules
- Finding content in browser history, apps, or messaging

A word of grace

If you see a pattern in a spouse, approach with love — not accusation. Most people struggling with this are already carrying deep shame. The goal is healing, not punishment.

If you discover a child has been exposed, create an environment where they feel safe telling you what they've seen without fear of punishment. Their first encounter is almost never their fault.

SECTION 6

What You Can Do Today

Filtering your internet is one of the most practical, immediate steps you can take to protect your family. It's not about distrust — it's about removing the easy access that leads to problems in the first place. Think of it the same way you'd lock a medicine cabinet or put a fence around a pool.

Network-Level Protection

- DNS-level filtering on your home router (NextDNS)
- Blocks harmful content before it ever reaches any device
- Custom block lists tailored to your family's needs
- Works on all WiFi-connected devices automatically

Device-Level Safeguards

- DNS-over-HTTPS configuration to prevent bypass
- Mobile carrier content filtering (e.g., T-Mobile Web Guard)
- Mesh network or router-level enforcement
- Accountability partner access to the filtering dashboard

Accountability Structure

- A trusted person (spouse, friend, pastor) holds admin credentials
- No single person can disable the filter alone
- Dashboard shows blocked attempts and overall patterns
- Built for transparency, not surveillance

SECTION 7

Ready to Protect Your Home?

We offer this as a free service to any family or individual who wants a safer home network. Most setups take about an hour, done remotely over a video call. We'll walk you through everything and make sure it's working before we're done.

What's included

Full home WiFi filtering setup, device-level hardening, accountability partner configuration, and follow-up support

How it works	One video call (approx. 60 min). We walk you through the setup step by step on your own equipment.
Cost	Donation-based. Suggested minimum of \$50. Cost should never be a barrier — if you can't give, we'll still help.
Ongoing cost	NextDNS is free for up to 300,000 queries/month (enough for most families). Pro plan is ~\$20/year if needed.

To get started, visit safehome.lopezstudio.co/contact or email jack.charlie.lopez@gmail.com

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

— Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

APPENDIX

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Every statistic and claim in this guide is drawn from peer-reviewed research, government advisories, or established child-safety organizations. Numbers correspond to citation brackets throughout the guide.

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This guide was created with care by The Safe Home Project. Share freely.

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