

# Computer Solutions

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## Remedying spyware and virus threats

**Whilst taking all reasonable precautions and with every good intent it is not possible to guarantee the success of an attempt to remedy a spyware or virus threat.**

We have no control over the software tools we use and need to rely on and trust in the writers of such software. It is possible that irreparable damage has been done by a spyware or virus threat and that there is no remedy other than a complete software install.

Files affected by spyware and virus threats may be actioned in several ways –

Disinfect affected files;

Quarantine affected files;

Delete affected files.

It is possible that, as a consequence of these actions, affected files may become unusable –

If a file is a data file (e.g. document, spreadsheet) such data will be lost;

If a file is part of a software application that application will become unstable or inoperable (which would need a re-install of the software application);

If a file is part of the operating system the computer will become unstable or inoperable (which would need a complete software re-install);

If a file controls a network the network will become unstable or inoperable (which would need a complete software re-install).

There are a number of ways to resolve spyware and virus infections –

The, potentially, least effective method is to update antispayware / antivirus software and scan for spyware / viruses in 'Normal Mode'.

The potentially, more effective, method is to update antispayware / antivirus software and scan for spyware / viruses in 'Safe Mode'.

The next, nearly 100% guaranteed, method is to temporarily install the hard disk drive in another computer (which has antispayware / antivirus software installed and updated immediately before) and scan for spyware / viruses. Doing this obviates the issue that some antispayware / antivirus software is crippled by an infection.

The only absolutely guaranteed 100% way of resolving a spyware / virus infection is to format the hard disk drive and re-install Windows, all software and user files (which have been previously copied to, say, another hard disk drive or memory stick). (This has the redeeming feature of also clearing software left behind by an incomplete uninstall.) It is recommended that antispayware / antivirus software should be installed immediately after installing Windows and that both are updated. There is a vulnerability to acquire another spyware / virus infection whilst this is being done and it is, therefore, recommended to, then, scan for spyware / viruses before installing any further software.

**If you have any further queries on this subject please contact me.**

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*Helping to make computers efficient and effective*