The Computer Tech Squad

Your Computer Has Malware: Three Ways to Fix It

A plain-language guide to help you choose

Malware is any harmful software that sneaks onto a computer — viruses, trojans, spyware, ransomware, and similar programs. Some are obvious, like pop-ups or a slow machine. Others hide quietly in the background, stealing passwords or watching what you type. Because the sneakiest malware is designed to avoid being found, the way we clean your computer makes a big difference in how sure we can be that it is truly gone.

Think of it like a house with a pest problem. You can set traps for the bugs you see, you can tear out and replace the damaged rooms, or you can rebuild the house on a clean foundation. Each approach costs a different amount and gives you a different level of certainty. Below are your three options.

Option 1 (Recommended): Back Up, Clean Reinstall, Change Passwords — $200

We copy your personal files (documents, photos, music, etc.) to safe storage, completely erase the computer, and install a fresh copy of Windows 11. We then reinstall the programs you need and return your files. Finally, you change the passwords to all of your accounts and websites.

Why this is the best option:

- **It is the only near-certain fix.** Erasing the drive removes everything, including malware that hides from antivirus programs. Nothing harmful is left behind to come back later.
- **Like-new performance.** You get a clean, fast system without years of leftover clutter, which often makes the computer feel like new.
- **Protects your accounts.** Many infections steal saved passwords. Changing them locks out anyone who may have already captured them — the computer may be clean, but stolen passwords still work until they are changed.
- **Your data is kept safe.** Your files are scanned before being returned so nothing infected is carried back over.

Option 2: Windows Repair Install, Remove Suspect Programs — $150

We reinstall Windows 11 “over the top” of itself. This replaces damaged or tampered Windows system files while leaving your files, settings, and most programs in place. We then remove any programs that look suspicious or unwanted.

Why choose it: It fixes much of the damage malware causes to Windows itself and keeps your setup as you know it. **The trade-off:** because your existing programs and settings stay, malware hiding inside them, or in places a repair does not touch, could survive. It is a strong middle ground, but not as certain as a full reinstall.

Option 3: Search and Destroy — $125

We run several professional antivirus and anti-malware scans, then manually inspect the places malware likes to hide (startup items, browser add-ons, scheduled tasks, and so on), removing every threat we find.

Why choose it: It is the least intrusive and least expensive option — nothing is reinstalled and your computer stays exactly as it was, minus the threats we detect. **The trade-off:** we can only remove what the tools and our inspection can find. Advanced malware is built to disguise itself, so this option **does not guarantee** complete removal. It works well for minor, easily identified infections.

At a Glance

	Option 1: Clean Reinstall	Option 2: Repair Install	Option 3: Search & Destroy
Price	$200	$150	$125
Your files kept?	Yes (backed up & restored)	Yes (left in place)	Yes (untouched)
Programs reinstalled?	Yes, needed ones	Mostly kept	Kept
Malware fully removed?	Yes — highest confidence	Very likely	Not guaranteed
Password changes?	Yes, all accounts assisted	Recommended	Recommended

Our Advice

If you bank, shop, or handle anything private on this computer, we recommend Option 1. It costs a little more, but it is the only choice that gives you real peace of mind. Whichever option you choose, we strongly suggest changing your important passwords — starting with email and banking — and turning on two-step verification wherever it is offered. Another level up is to create a new email account and have your phone company provide a new phone number to remove you from spammers and hackers target lists. We also recommend to only shop on Amazon or well-known websites that also have phone contact support.

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