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Another Warning for Parents About On-Line Pornography

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Janet Komblum of *USA Today* warns parents that children as young as grade school are often exposed to on-line pornography.

In "['Porn 'Tidal Wave' Puts Parents to Test](#)," she advises: *If your child surfs the Web, chances are he or she already has seen pornography — maybe even hard-core porn. More than a decade after the American public started cruising the Web, it is clear that children can find everything from nudity to sites featuring sexual violence and other extremes. For parents, this creates challenges that never existed before: how to keep porn away from young eyes, and what to do when safety measures fail.*

More:

There are steps parents can take. Internet safety consultant and legal expert Parry Aftab recommends that parents allow children under 10 to go online only through such Internet companies as MSN and America Online, which offer protected, children-only areas.

When children are older — up to 14 — and if they're given access to the Internet outside online companies, she recommends that parents buy and install a software filter on their computer. (She specifically recommends going with a filtering company that has been around for a number of years, such as CyberPatrol.) But parents need to remember that kids can get onto the Internet through many avenues, including portable video games, schools, libraries, coffee shops and friends' houses. "There is no silver bullet," says Paul Saffo of the Institute for the Future in Menlo Park., Calif. "There are so many ways that kids can stumble onto stuff. Unfortunately, I think this is a moment in time where the best answers are the most old-fashioned. You know: Talk to your kids, engage with what they are surfing on the Web. Then, on top of that, do whatever you can electronically."

Remember parents, you set the rules in your home. Install browser filters and reporting software, and put the computer in the kitchen or another family gathering place — not the kid's bedroom. Protect their eyes and hearts.

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