

**Vagina
Privacy
Network**

Vagina Privacy Network *Guide*



Your body is your business — and no one else's. But today, people seeking information on their reproductive health will often leave a digital trail, and this could leave them exposed.

This guide provides tips to help anyone who is concerned about their digital privacy when:

- **searching** for information online (including directions to clinics)
- **messaging** with friends and family about reproductive care
- **scheduling** appointments for care
- **visiting** a clinic
- **paying** for things related to reproductive care

Remember to always seek reproductive care from authorized and reputable professionals. And keep in mind that no solution can fully prevent digital tracking, but taking these steps can offer a degree of protection.



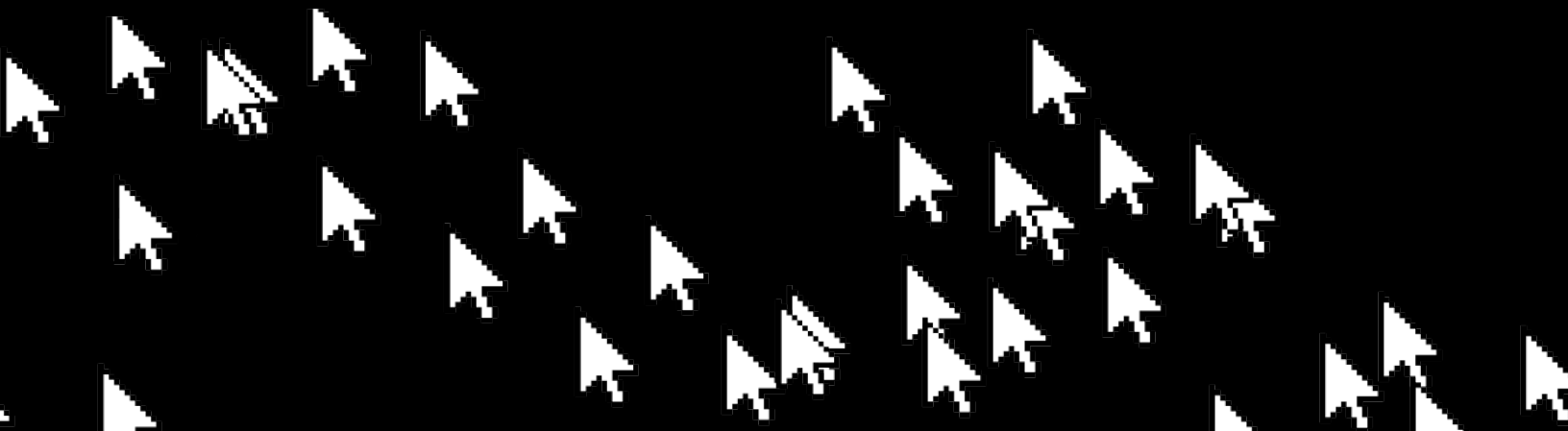


Search Safely: Download a secure web browser

The safest way to search for information online is to use a secure browser that does not track your location or search history.

Our partner *Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF)* shares instructions for downloading a browser that **prevents** the websites you visit from **identifying** your specific device. The protections on this browser are different than what you would get using 'incognito mode' or 'private browsing' (where browsing history is still tracked by your internet service provider). When searching for local resources, make sure to mention your area, as your location will be hidden.

See EFF's recommendation and download instructions for [Windows](#), [MacOS](#), [iOS](#), and [Android](#).



Shhh:

Chat through encrypted messaging



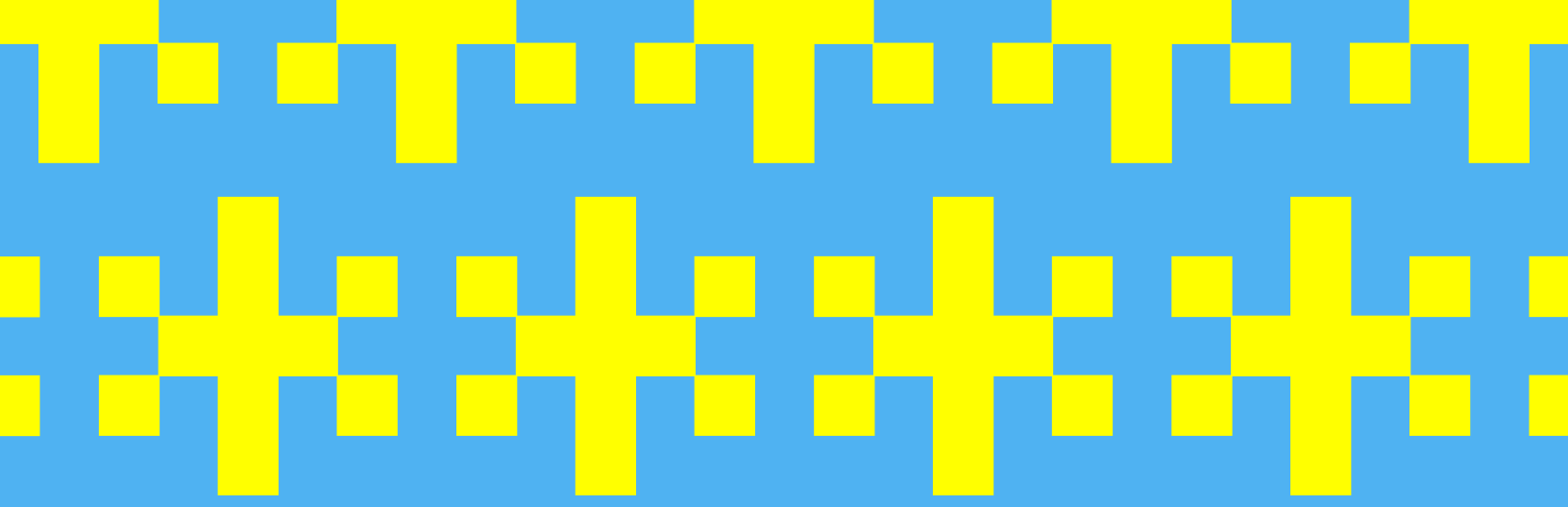
Use a messaging app like Signal (that offers end-to-end encryption) and turn on ‘disappearing messages.’ Make sure that the intended recipient also has the messaging app downloaded. Avoid using email or direct messages on social media to share confidential information on your reproductive health as these don’t have the same protections!

[DOWNLOAD SIGNAL](#)

A few things to keep in mind when using Signal:

If you have an iPhone/Mac and are using Signal, tap on your profile icon in the upper left corner of the Signal app to access privacy settings. **Switch off ‘Show Calls in Recents’** to prevent your history from syncing to the cloud.

Most importantly, make sure **‘disappearing messages’** is turned on.



Since apps on your phone are constantly collecting data, it's best to delete any apps you don't use on a regular basis. For those apps that you do keep, go to 'settings' and make sure only the **necessary permissions are turned on**.

And keep in mind that information collected by 'period tracker' or other reproductive health apps can be **especially risky** for those concerned about their privacy. [*Euki*](#) is a good option as it doesn't collect any personal data and all the information you enter is stored locally on your phone, never in the cloud. But keep in mind that if someone were to search your phone, they would find all of the data you've input.



Cut the clutter:
**Delete
unnecessary
apps from
your phone**



Dial discreetly:

Consider pre-paid options

If you'd like to call to make an appointment with a reproductive healthcare provider but don't want the call to be logged, it's best to use a **pre-paid phone**. If you're unable to use a pre-paid phone, apps like [*Hushed*](#) enable you to make calls on your existing device using a secondary number that's not tied to your account. Be aware that purchases made on your credit or debit card (including pre-paid phones and apps) can be tracked – see **Tip #6** for more info.

If you're making an appointment online, keep in mind that all personal information you input will be stored. This holds true even when using a privacy-focused web browser — the browser won't store your information, but the site where you input it will. So if you need to enter an email address when booking an appointment or making purchases regarding your reproductive health and want to avoid receiving appointment reminders and receipts on an email address associated with your identity, we recommend going to your secure web browser and creating a new, separate address on [*Tuta*](#) specifically for this purpose.



Go unnoticed:
Think about how you travel

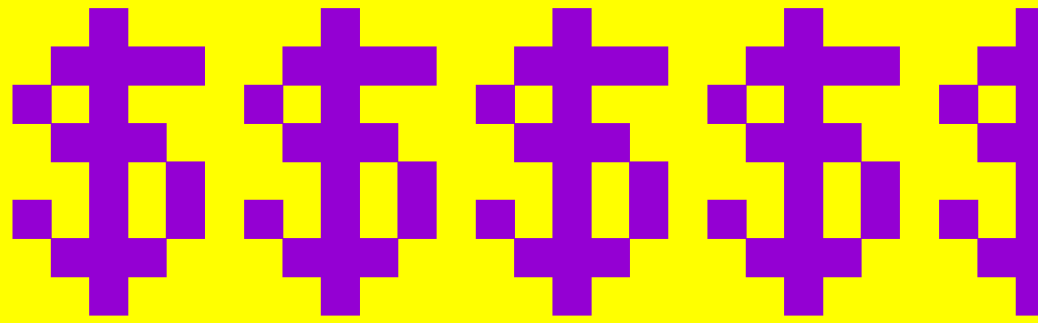
If you're concerned about your location being tracked when visiting an abortion clinic, your digital devices could put you at risk. **Your phone can be tracked through network signals, WiFi, Bluetooth,** and other methods, even when location services are turned off, so if you're worried about your location being identified, leave your phone at home or switched off. Some car models are also equipped with tracking technology, so try taking public transportation, or park your car a couple of blocks away.

And remember that ridesharing apps track your location, so it's best to avoid them if you're concerned. It's also important to be mindful of how you search for directions to reproductive healthcare facilities. Be aware that many navigation apps collect a lot of user data and are known for not keeping location information private. **It's best to use a privacy-friendly app like Apple Maps if you're using iOS or OsmAnd if you're using an Android.**

BE AWARE



Money talks: **Be aware of how you're paying**



In many countries, purchases made using a **check, credit card, debit card, online account, or store loyalty card can be tracked**. That's why it's safest to use cash when paying for reproductive care, including abortion care that you'd like to keep private. Keep in mind that even things like pregnancy tests can imply pregnancy.

If you don't have access to cash or need to purchase something online, you can buy a pre-paid gift card from a provider like Visa or American Express, which you can register for with an email you create solely for that purpose. (See **Tip #4** for info on how to create a separate email account.)



Take the
Steps

Spread the love:

**Share these
tips with your
'circle of trust'**

Many people seeking reproductive care, including abortion, **don't do it alone** — they often discuss their plans with others. If you're concerned about your privacy, it's crucial that — first and foremost — you 100% trust anyone you discuss your reproductive health with, whether that's a healthcare provider, friend, or family member. It's also important that those in your circle of trust follow the digital privacy tips provided in this guide.



Remember:

Just like birth control, when it comes to protecting your digital privacy, no method is 100% effective. Always be cautious about what information you share and how you go about seeking reproductive care. If you're concerned about your digital privacy, the best protection is to share as little as possible and only what is strictly necessary for what you need.

And don't forget to make sure that friends and family in your 'circle of trust' follow these tips as well!

To learn more, please see the Electronic Frontier Foundation's [Surveillance Self-Defense resources](#). And for more resources to support digital security for the abortion access movement, visit the [Digital Defense Fund](#).

Please note this is not guidance on what reproductive care is available where you live. When seeking abortion care, it's important to know your rights. You can find a global map of abortion laws [here](#). For those in the United States, laws surrounding abortion are rapidly changing on a state-by-state basis. See [here](#) for an overview of the laws by state.

This guidance was developed in partnership with Eva Galperin, Director of Cybersecurity at the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Recommended apps and services mentioned in this toolkit are not directly affiliated with the Vagina Privacy Network or MSI Reproductive Choices.

