

How to run antivirus on an old computer - checklist

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Demand specs first. Microsoft Defender can be enough. A paid suite is cleanup plus a light VPN, not a hardware upgrade.

1. Write down Windows edition, RAM, and CPU from Settings > System > About. Note HDD vs SSD and whether memory sits above 80% with one browser.
2. Copy Documents and photos to an external drive (or make a restore point).
3. Finish Windows Update. Uninstall trial security tools so two real-time scanners do not fight.
4. If you still buy a cleanup-plus-VPN bundle, install only the plan you paid for. Decline extra toolbars.
5. Run the cleanup pass once; keep browser profiles and tax folders.
6. Turn a VPN on for public Wi-Fi; leave it off at home if it slows a weak CPU. Note any daily data cap.
7. Write the renewal date. Cancel inside the refund window if the laptop is slower than before.

4 GB RAM plus a spinning disk: any extra resident scanner can feel heavy.

Confirm first-year price, renewal, device limit, and refund window on checkout. We do not invent lab scores here.

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