



Protect Yourself, Your Family And Your Finances in 2006

(NAPSA)—Every year most of us pledge to eat healthier, get more exercise and lose that extra weight. Although all these help you feel better and give you peace of mind, there is another member of the household that also needs to stay healthy: the home personal computer.

The home computer gives you the power to send e-mail to friends, share baby pictures with Grandma and get point-to-point directions with a click of the mouse. But, with the growth of the Internet, an increasing number of people are trying to steal sensitive information such as your address, credit card or Social Security number. Here are the top things to do to help protect your PC and yourself online:

- **Use an Internet firewall.**

Firewalls help protect your computer from attackers who might try to delete information from your computer, make it crash or even steal personal information. For your firewall to be effective, it needs to be set up properly.

- **Run regular updates.** Regularly update your software, including your operating system and both anti-virus and anti-spyware software, to make sure you're better protected from the latest attacks.

- **Install antivirus programs.** Anti-virus programs help protect you from harmful programs, called viruses, that attach themselves to a program or file to spread from computer to computer. Viruses can slow your computer's performance, cause a crash or even allow spammers to send e-mail through your account.

- **Use anti-spyware software.** Spyware is software that



Many Americans are resolved to protect their computers from online threats this year.

can, as the name implies, spy on computer users by collecting personal information or change the configuration of your computer without your consent or control. Spyware can significantly slow your computer, make unwanted changes to key settings and be difficult to remove.

According to a recent Consumer Reports study, nearly 65 percent of Internet users fell victim to a computer virus infection within the past two years.

Computers running Microsoft Windows have built-in features to help people manage important security settings, including a firewall, automatic free updates and the status of anti-virus software.

For more information on these steps and how to better protect your PC in 2006, check out <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security>.