

# Connecting to the Internet

There are several good reasons to connect your Mirror system to the internet via a high-speed connection (cable modem, DSL, etc.):

- Microsoft frequently releases updates to the Windows operating system. With a fast internet connection, you can have Windows Updates keep your system up-to-date, secure and running smoothly.
- Should you require technical support, Canfield's technicians can use the latest internet-based technology to connect directly to your computer and quickly diagnose and fix your issues.

The best way to ensure that the computers in your practice are secure is to have your network set up by a qualified IT professional. If you wish to connect to the Internet yourself, however, there are three important safeguards you should take advantage of.

## Anti-Virus Software

No computer should be connected to the Internet without having some kind of anti-virus software installed. Anti-virus software protects your computer from malicious programs such as viruses, Trojan horses and worms. These programs frequently enter a computer via email and can perform a number of damaging functions such as deleting files or sending private information out onto the internet. Anti-virus can help prevent you from accidentally downloading a malicious program or from running such a program if it somehow ends up on your computer.

Before purchasing anti-virus software, you may wish to read reviews on the following web sites:

- [www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com)
- [reviews.cnet.com](http://reviews.cnet.com)
- [antivirus.about.com](http://antivirus.about.com)

## Firewalls

A firewall provides a barrier between your computer and the Internet. A firewall prevents unauthorized access to your computer and controls the transfer of information between your computer and the Internet.

There are two types of firewalls: hardware firewalls and software firewalls. You may choose to use one or the other type of firewall, or both.

A hardware firewall is a piece of equipment located between your computer and the Internet that acts as a gatekeeper. Hardware firewalls have the benefit of being able to protect an entire network from one location. Many broadband connections (DSL and Cable) use a router, which may have a hardware firewall built in. You should consult the manufacturer of your router to ensure that it has been configured for optimal security.

A software firewall is a program that runs in the background on your computer and controls the flow of data into and out of your system. A software firewall is often easier to configure than a hardware firewall and allows you to set security on a program-by-program basis. However, you must configure software firewalls for each computer individually.

While Windows XP has a software firewall built in, it is very basic. At a minimum, you should consider downloading the free ZoneAlarm from [www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com) . If you wish to purchase firewall software, you may want to read reviews on the following web sites:

- [www.pcmag.com](http://www.pcmag.com)
- [reviews.cnet.com](http://reviews.cnet.com)
- [www.firewallguide.com](http://www.firewallguide.com)

## Windows Updates

Microsoft frequently releases updates to the Windows operating system and other Microsoft programs. Frequently these updates address security holes that might allow hackers to access your computer. Windows updates may be run

automatically to ensure that your system is always up to date. As an added benefit, keeping your system current should help ensure trouble-free operation of most of your software.