

Need some helpful tips on how to monitor your teen's IM account?

- Ask your teen if she has an IM account. If she does, inquire about who's on her "buddy list." If there are a number of people on her list who she does not personally know or who you do not know then go through with her and purge the list.
- 2 Set up privacy or security settings to block strangers from Instant Messaging or e-mailing your teen. Your Internet Service Provider (ISP) can assist you.
- 3 Ask your teen to give you his log-in information and tell him why you would like to have it. This is not an issue of privacy, but rather of safety. Set some ground rules with your teen and establish under what circumstances you would be inclined to check his IM account.
- ◆ Learn Internet lingo. Teens can be clever and have a laundry list of abbreviations they use to communicate to each other without your knowledge. Become more familiar with these abbreviated terms, as well as the ones they use to talk about risky behaviors, such as drug or alcohol use.
- **5** Set up your own IM account. Most services are free and easy to use. And you'll be even more connected to your teen in their digital world.