🎄 Holiday Online Safety Tips for December

December is a season of joy, celebration, and—unfortunately—an increase in online scams. With holiday shopping, festive distractions, and charitable giving all peaking this month, cybercriminals see an opportunity to exploit the rush. Here's how you can stay safe online while enjoying the season.

🔐 Shop Smart This Holiday Season

- **Stick to trusted retailers**: Buy gifts only from reputable stores or official brand websites.
- **Check URLs carefully**: Fraudulent sites often mimic legitimate ones with small spelling changes.
- **Use secure payment methods**: Credit cards or payment services with fraud protection are safer than debit cards.
- **Beware of "holiday urgency" scams**: Emails claiming "limited-time Christmas deals" or "last-minute shipping offers" are common phishing tactics.

🎁 Holiday-Themed Risks to Watch

- **Counterfeit toys and electronics**: These can be unsafe and even dangerous for children.
- **Fake charity appeals**: December is a big month for donations, so verify charities before giving.
- **Holiday e-cards and attachments**: Malware often hides in festive-looking files or links.
- **Gift card scams**: Fraudsters may trick you into buying gift cards as payment.

🚨 Actionable Steps

- **Update your devices** before shopping online to patch security vulnerabilities.
- **Enable two-factor authentication** on accounts you'll use for purchases.
- **Monitor bank statements** closely in December for unauthorized charges.
- **Educate family members** (especially kids and older relatives) about online scams disguised as holiday cheer.

🎅 Make Online Safety Part of Your Traditions

Cybercriminals love the holidays too—but for all the wrong reasons. By treating online safety as part of your December traditions (like checking lights before hanging them or keeping candles safe), you can make sure your digital celebrations stay merry and secure.

Stay safe, shop smart, and enjoy the season!