

**Is it a Hoax? Things to look for.** quoted from About.com

1. Note whether the text you've received was actually written by the person who sent it. Did anyone sign their name to it? If not, be skeptical.
2. Look for the telltale phrase, *'Forward this to everyone you know!'* The more urgent the plea, the more suspect the message.
3. Look for statements like *'This is NOT a hoax'* or *'This is NOT an urban legend.'* They typically mean the opposite of what they say.
4. Watch for overly emphatic language, as well as frequent use of UPPERCASE LETTERS and multiple exclamation points!!!!!!
5. If the text seems aimed more at persuading than informing the reader, be suspicious. Like propagandists, hoaxers are more interested in pushing people's emotional buttons than communicating accurate information.
6. If the message purports to impart extremely important information that you've never heard of before or read elsewhere in legitimate venues, be very suspicious.
7. Read carefully and think critically about what the message says, looking for logical inconsistencies, violations of common sense and blatantly false claims.
8. Look for subtle or not-so-subtle jokes — indications that the author is pulling your leg.
9. Check for references to outside sources of information. Hoaxes don't typically cite verifiable evidence, nor link to Websites with corroborating information.
10. Check to see if the message has been debunked by Websites that debunk urban legends and Internet hoaxes
11. Research any factual claims in the text to see if there is published evidence to support them. If you find none, odds are you've been the recipient of an email hoax.

**Check it out** – Some web sites to explore

- <http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/>
- <http://www.snopes.com/>
- <http://symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html> (Norton's home site)

**Caution**

Many hoaxes involve the medical field and purport to have a miracle cure but are no more believable than TV ads. Always verify with a health care professional beforehand. ***Snake oil and medical quackery is alive and well.***

**Before you forward – edit all address lists**

---