

16 Best Free Antivirus Programs

Complete Reviews of the Best Free Antivirus Software for Windows

Updated March 2014

One nasty virus could expose your financial information or stop your computer from working at all. What you need is the best antivirus software possible on your computer. Luckily, some of the best are also completely free!

Many companies offer free versions of their popular antivirus programs for home users. My favorites are [avast! Free Antivirus](#), [AVG Anti-Virus Free](#), and [MSE](#) (in that order) but be sure to look through the alphabetical list below to find the best free antivirus for you.

Important: I've included no trial or shareware antivirus programs in this list. These are the best antivirus programs that are completely free and work similarly to, or better than, expensive programs from companies like Norton and McAfee.

See my [Free On-Demand Virus Scanners](#) list if you're interested in free antivirus tools *without* constant virus protection or my [Free Online Virus Scanners](#) list if you're interested in a free online-based antivirus scan of a file.

1. [Ad-Aware Free Antivirus+](#)

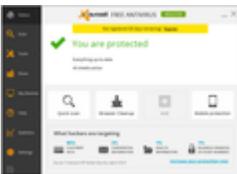


Lavasoft's Ad-Aware Free Antivirus+ program is different than the "Ad-Aware" you may already be familiar with. This program is a true, always-on, completely free antivirus program.

Ad-Aware Free Antivirus+ supports Windows 8, 7, Vista, and XP.

If my list was anything other than alphabetical, Ad-Aware Free Antivirus+ probably wouldn't head up the pack, mainly because email scanning isn't supported. However, if you love Lavasoft's other free products, Ad-Aware Free Antivirus+ is a pretty solid choice.

2. [avast! Free Antivirus 2014](#)



AVAST Software's avast! Free Antivirus 2014 most certainly deserves to be on any list of the best free antivirus programs. avast! Free Antivirus has fully functioning antivirus and antispyware engines protecting your PC from threats from the Internet, your files, emails, and even instant messages.

avast! Free Antivirus 2014 (version 9) supports Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

One big reason I included avast! Free Antivirus 2014 as a best free antivirus program is because of its "heuristics engine" which can detect previously unknown viruses and other malware. I also like the fact that AVAST has been making this antivirus product since 1988 and is often cited as the most installed antivirus product.

[avast! Free Antivirus 2014 Review and Free Download](#)

3. [AVG AntiVirus Free 2014](#)



AntiVirus Free 2014 from AVG is one of the best free antivirus software tools available and is probably my personal favorite.

AVG AntiVirus Free is a full-fledged antivirus and antispysware tool, includes an email scanner, link scanner, scheduled scanning options, automatic updates, and more. There is no need to pay for an antivirus program when one this good is just a download away.

AVG AntiVirus Free 2014 works on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

The huge number of premium features, frequency of updating, and install-it-and-forget-it aspect of AVG's AntiVirus Free 2014 really do make it one of the best of the best free antivirus programs available today.

[AVG AntiVirus Free 2014 Review and Free Download](#)

4. [Avira Free AntiVirus](#)



Avira Free AntiVirus protects you from viruses, Trojans, worms, spyware, adware, and various other kinds of malware, making it a fully functional antimalware tool and certainly one of the best free antivirus programs.

Avira Free AntiVirus (version 14) works on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP. Avira also makes Avira Free for Linux.

The scope of malware that Avira Free AntiVirus can keep you safe from is alone enough to make it one of the best free antivirus software programs but the heuristics and ease of use add to its value too. The only things I didn't like about Avira Free AntiVirus was the configuration you have to complete after installation which might be intimidating if you're a computer novice.

[Avira Free AntiVirus 2013 Review and Free Download](#)

5. [Bitdefender Antivirus Free Edition](#)



Bitdefender Antivirus Free Edition is on par with any of the arguably better-known free antivirus programs in my list.

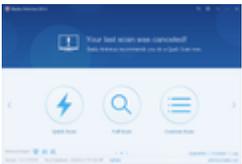
Bitdefender Antivirus Free Edition is incredibly easy to setup and configure, uses very little system resources (it won't slow down your computer), and doesn't constantly suggest that you upgrade to their premium offerings.

Antivirus Free Edition by Bitdefender fully supports Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

The sheer simplicity of Bitdefender Antivirus Free Edition, both during installation and use, make it, in my opinion, one of the better of the best free antivirus programs.

[Bitdefender Antivirus Free Edition Review and Free Download](#)

6. Baidu Antivirus 2014



Baidu Antivirus 2014 is lightweight and fights malware via its cloud-based virus database.

Baidu Antivirus 2014 works in Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

Install Baidu Antivirus 2014 alongside other antivirus software for increased protection. It automatically updates, scans USB devices and the Windows registry, and has a built-in cloud file scanner to upload suspicious files to Baidu to be scanned.

Overall, Badiu Antivirus 2014 ran quickly, using little system resources, and seemed to function similar to the other antivirus programs in this list.

[Baidu Antivirus 2014 Review & Free Download](#)

7. Comodo Antivirus 6



Comodo Antivirus 6 from Comodo Security Solutions is another excellent program, easily one of the best free antivirus options out there. Comodo Antivirus 6 protects you from several threat sources, just as most of the other free antivirus programs on this list do.

Comodo Antivirus 6 works on Windows 8, Windows 7 and Windows Vista.

Comodo Antivirus 6 ranks as a best free antivirus solution almost solely because of its *Defense+* technology that, by default, assumes unknown files are threats instead of safe. That sounds like it might cause problems but Comodo Antivirus utilizes some other technologies to make the whole process silent but still very effective.

[Comodo Antivirus 6 Review and Free Download](#)

8. [FortiClient 5](#)



FortiClient is an antivirus, web filtering, firewall, parental control, optimization, (and then some) program that's powerful enough for a business to use. It's more accurately referred to as a "threat management" tool.

FortiClient 5 works on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

While that might all sound really complicated, especially considering that you probably only have one computer you're worried about, FortiClient is really easy to setup, automatically updates its virus definition files, does a full system scan once per week, and much more, all without you ever having to worry about it.

[FortiClient 5.0 Review & Free Download](#)

9. [Immunet FREE Antivirus 3](#)



Immunet FREE Antivirus 3 is a unique, cloud-based antivirus program, much like Panda Cloud Antivirus and Kingsoft Antivirus. Immunet FREE Antivirus 3 protects your computer from bots, worms, viruses, Trojans, keyloggers, and spyware.

Immunet FREE Antivirus 3 works on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP. You must be connected to the Internet at all times.

I think FREE Antivirus 3 from Immunet is one of the best free antivirus programs for several reasons: you never have to update it, it has completely free telephone based support, and it can be run alongside some of the other best free antivirus tools in this list, increasing your overall protection.

[Immunet FREE Antivirus 3 Review and Free Download](#)

10. [Kingsoft Antivirus 2012](#)



Kingsoft Antivirus 2012 is a cloud-based antivirus program like Panda Cloud Antivirus and Immunit FREE Antivirus. Kingsoft Antivirus keeps an eye out for malware locally, when downloading files, while chatting on IM, and more.

Kingsoft Antivirus 2012 works on Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista and Windows XP.

Kingsoft Antivirus 2012 ranks among the best free antivirus programs, especially among the cloud-based ones, because it also protects you when you're not online, a premium offering with some of the other cloud services. I also really liked how quickly the program seems to work.

[Kingsoft Antivirus 2012 Review and Free Download](#)

11. [Microsoft Security Essentials](#)



Security Essentials from Microsoft is definitely one of the best free antivirus programs available right now. Microsoft is relatively new to the antivirus game but don't let that scare you - Security Essentials is a fantastic antivirus program that protects you from all sorts of malware, updates automatically, and is incredibly easy to use.

Microsoft Security Essentials (MSE) supports Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP. The anti-malware protection in MSE is part of the built-in *Windows Defender* tool in Windows 8.

Two of the biggest reasons I added Microsoft Security Essentials to this list of the best free antivirus software is because it's available directly from Microsoft and also because it's very easy to see if your computer is secure from threats: if the icon next to your clock is green, you're good; if it's red, something is wrong.

[Microsoft Security Essentials Review and Free Download](#)

12. [Panda Cloud Antivirus Free 2](#)



Panda Cloud Antivirus Free 2 protects you from several kinds of malware threats - viruses, worms, Trojans, adware, and more - just like all the other free antivirus programs in this list.

What makes Panda Cloud Antivirus Free 2 one of the *best* free antivirus programs is that it does its job from "the cloud" meaning the hard antivirus work that typically slows down a computer is done on computers elsewhere on the Internet, freeing up your computer to work like it should and protecting you from malware even better.

Panda Cloud Antivirus Free 2 supports Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

Tip: Panda Cloud Antivirus Free tries to install a toolbar and change your browser's home page and default search provider during the installation process. Uncheck those boxes before continuing if you don't want them. None of those changes are required to use Panda Cloud Antivirus.

13. [Rising Antivirus Free Edition](#)



Rising Antivirus Free Edition is the free antivirus offering from China's largest antivirus maker, Rising Software.

Rising Antivirus Free Edition (version 23) works with Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

While I doubt that Rising Antivirus Free Edition would top anyone's list of the most *attractive* antivirus software interfaces, it does appear to be updated frequently and it was easy to use.

[Rising Antivirus Free Edition Review & Download](#)

14. [UnThreat Free AntiVirus 2014](#)



UnThreat Free AntiVirus 2014 offers standard malware protection, including threats via email. I found nothing too impressive about this program aside from its price... or lack thereof, I suppose.

UnThreat Free AntiVirus 2014 (version 6) works in Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

For the most part, I found the installation and use of UnThreat Free AntiVirus 2014 on par with most of the other best free antivirus programs I've profiled here. My favorite thing? UnThreat didn't try to install extra software or toolbars during installation, nor were any of my browser settings changed. While that should be commonplace, it's not, and it was appreciated.

[UnThreat Free AntiVirus 2013 Review & Free Download](#)

15. [Zillya! Antivirus](#)



© Zillya!

Zillya! Antivirus is another free antivirus program that works with Windows. It's nearly the same as most of the other programs from this list.

It actively scans emails and USB devices, and you can choose a quick, full, or custom virus scan. There's an exclusions category so you can remove certain folders and/or files from being scanned.

Update are automatically ran every few hours to ensure the databases are current, which is nice. However, what's not so nice is the fact that the installer is pretty large, at nearly 115 MB.

Zillya! Antivirus has a few extra features like a built-in task manager and startup manager to disable startup items.

Setup is really quick and doesn't contain any extra software or toolbars, which is a plus.

16. [ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus + Firewall 2013](#)



ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus + Firewall 2013 is just that - a combination free antivirus and firewall tool.

Check Point Software, the makers of ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus + Firewall 2013, have been in the firewall business for a long time. They make good software and this program is no exception. While I didn't notice anything spectacular about the antivirus portion of this program, having an antivirus and firewall tightly integrated has its benefits.

ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus + Firewall 2013 supports Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

Tip: Be sure to choose the *Custom Install* and then click the *Skip all offers* link to avoid installing the toolbar and changing your browser settings.

[ZoneAlarm Free Antivirus + Firewall 2013 Review & Free Download](#)

Which Free Antivirus Program is the "Best of the Best"?

As you can see from my list above, there are several fantastic free antivirus choices but which one really does the best job at preventing your computer from becoming infected?

Luckily, a company by the name of AV-TEST independently examines a number of free and paid antivirus programs and ranks them for *protection*, *repair*, and *usability*.