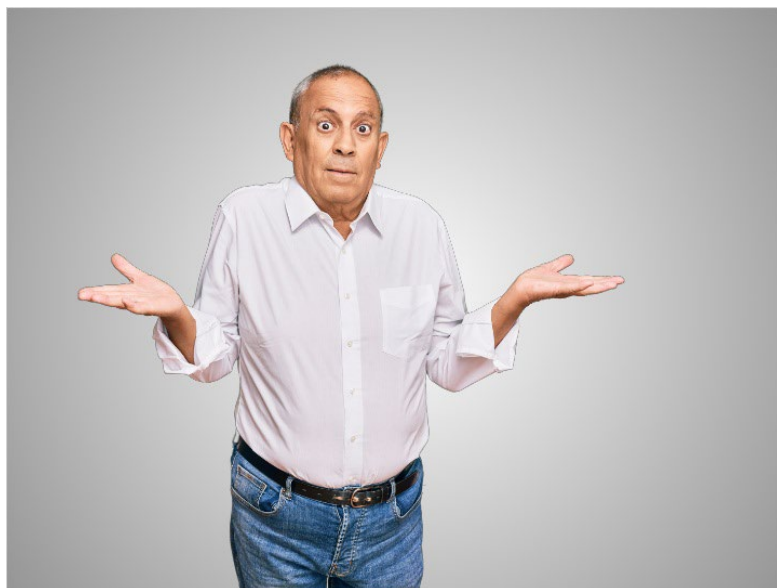# QR Codes Basics
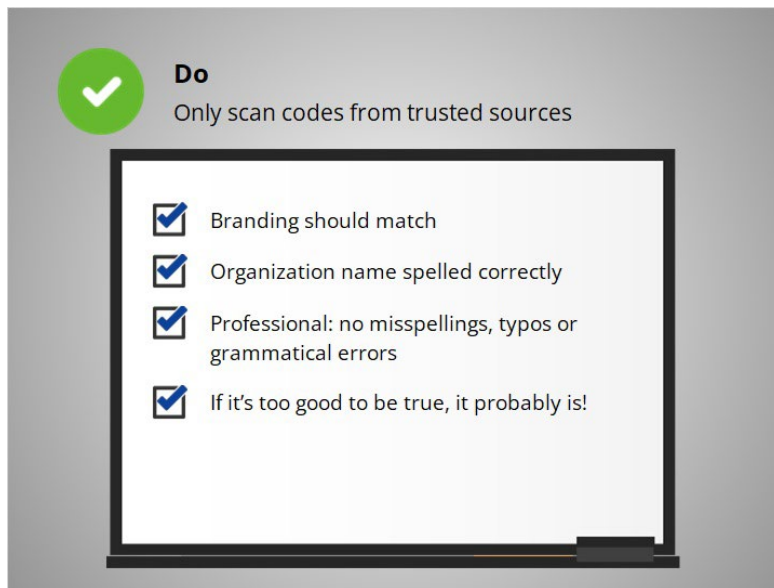## Activity 4: Using a QR Code Safely and Securely

Now that Carl can scan a QR code, he will learn to use it safely and securely.

While many QR codes you encounter are made by organizations you trust, bad actors may try to scam you.

So how can Carl use QR codes safely and securely?

Only scan codes from trusted sources. The item that opens after scanning the code should match the organization promoting the QR code. How can you tell?

The branding should match.

Check to make sure the organizational name in the URL or logo is spelled correctly — if it's not, be suspicious.

The item the QR code opens should look professional, this means no misspellings, typos, or grammatical errors.

If it is too good to be true, it probably is!

Do
Go directly to the organization's website address
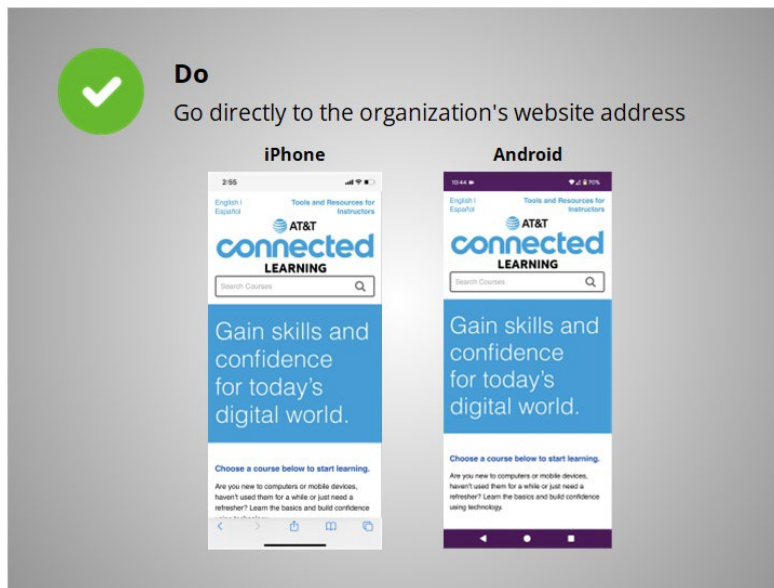
When in doubt, skip scanning the QR code. Instead, use your device's web browser to go directly to the organization's website and find the information promoted by the QR code.

Don't
Scan QR codes that are damaged or covered by a sticker
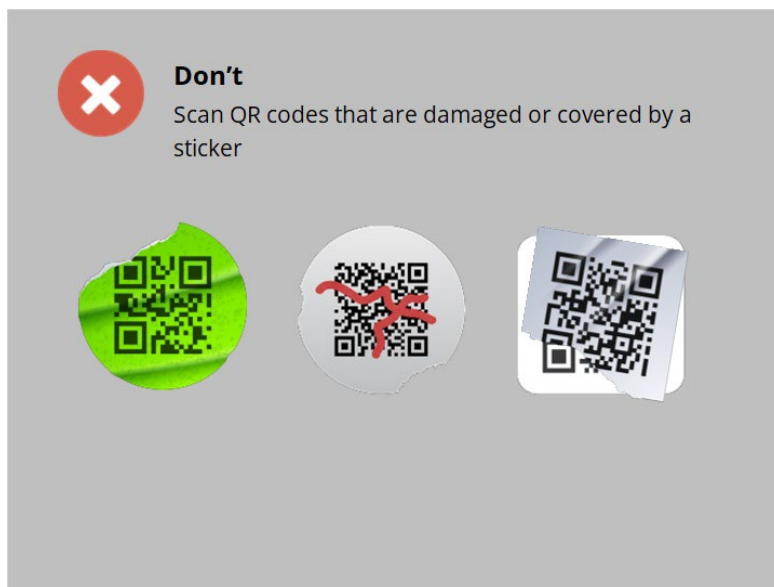
Avoid scanning codes that are damaged or covered by a sticker, including a sticker of a QR code pasted over the original QR code. Someone may be trying to trick you by directing you to a different website.
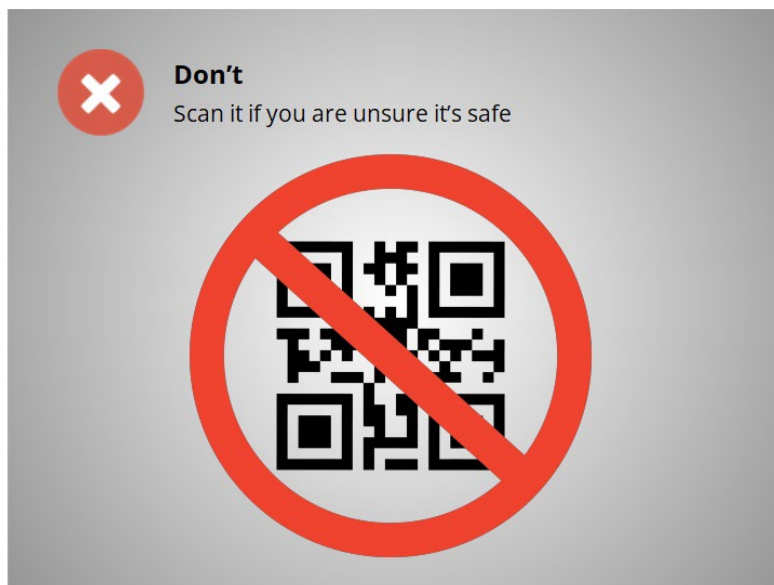
Don't
Give sensitive information to someone you don't know
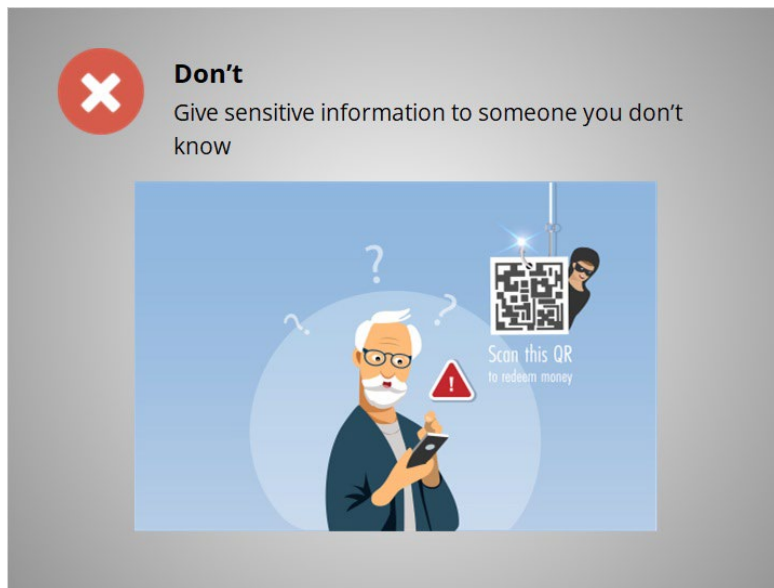
Be cautious about providing sensitive information like your Social Security number, credit card, bank information, and passwords.

Do
Make sure your device's operating system is current
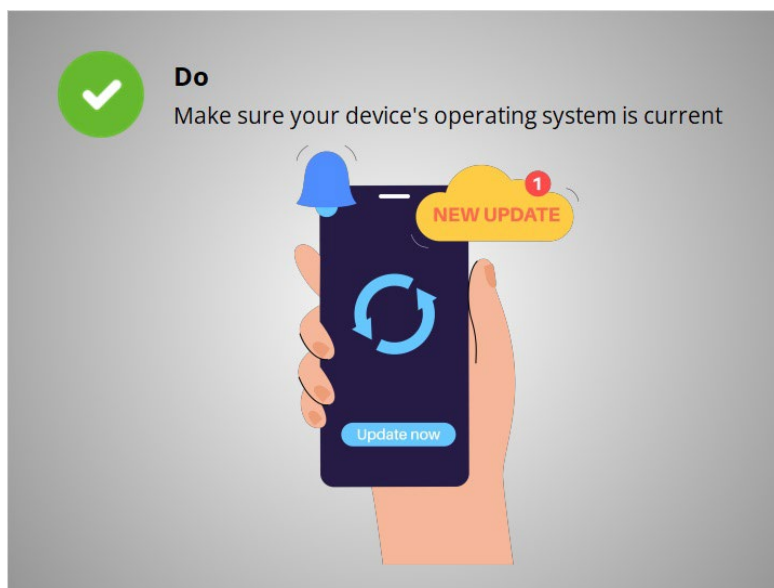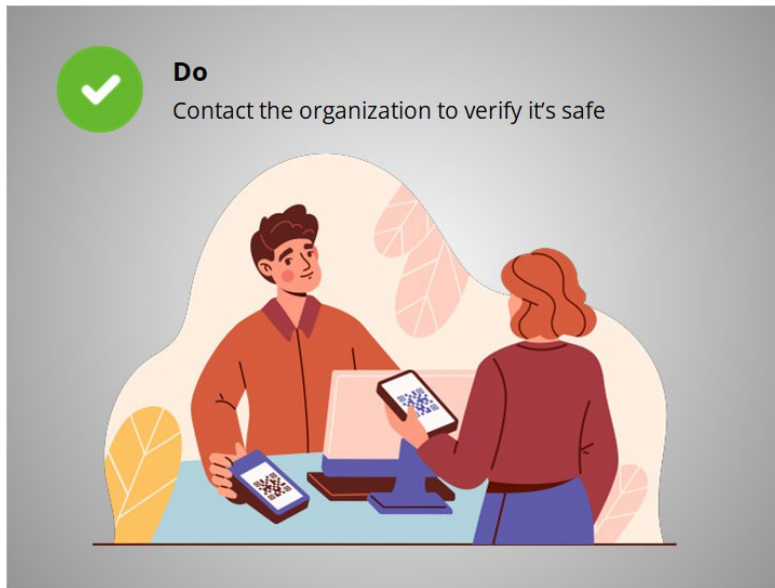
Make sure your device's operating system is up to date to ensure you have the most recent security updates installed on your device.

Do
Make sure the URL starts with HTTPS
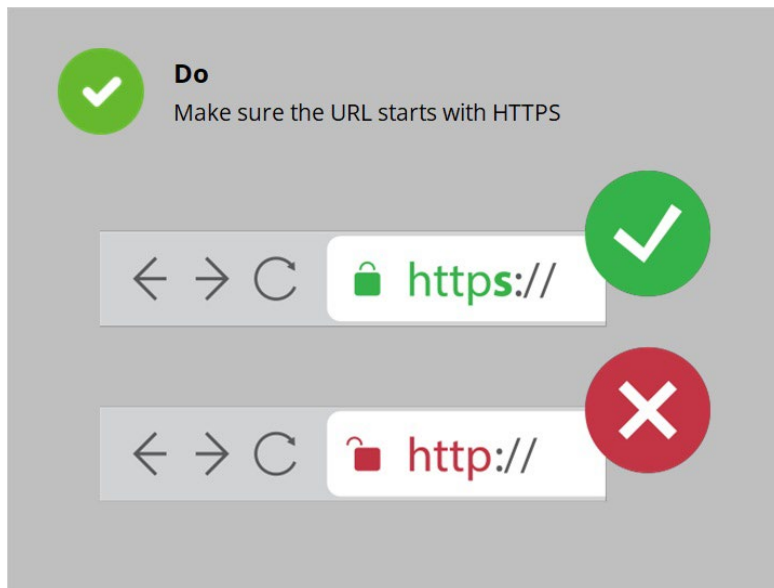
https://

http://

If it opens a website, it should be a secure HTTPS site.

Don't
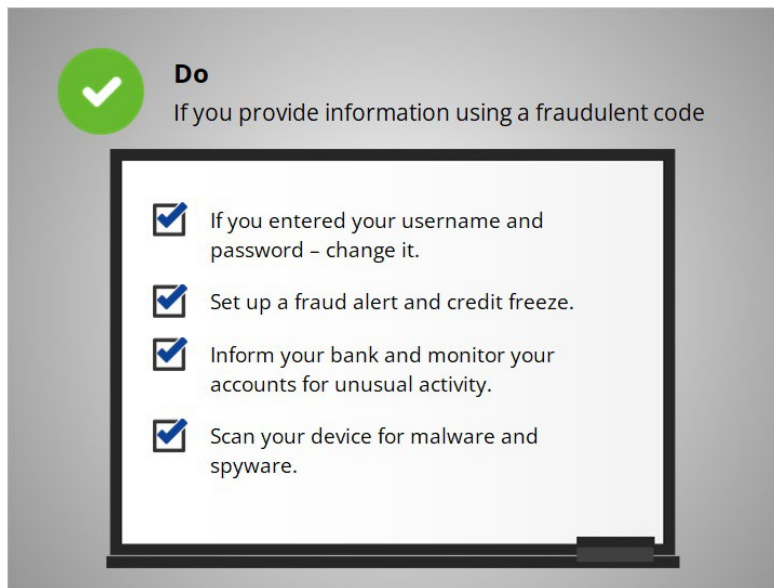Scan it if you are unsure it's safe

If you are unsure about a QR code, don't scan it.

Do
Contact the organization to verify it's safe

If you are at a store or restaurant and you are not sure the QR code is safe ask the staff to verify it is safe.

What should you do if you provide sensitive information using a fraudulent QR code?
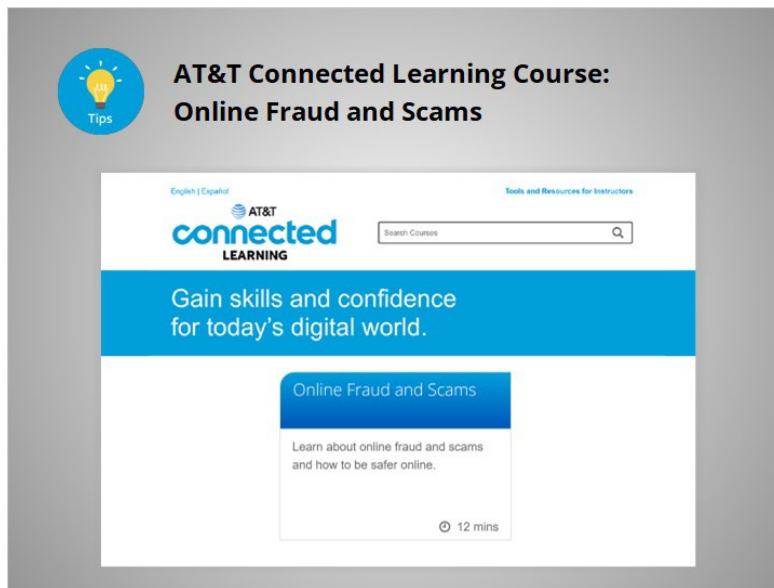
If you entered your username and password – change it.

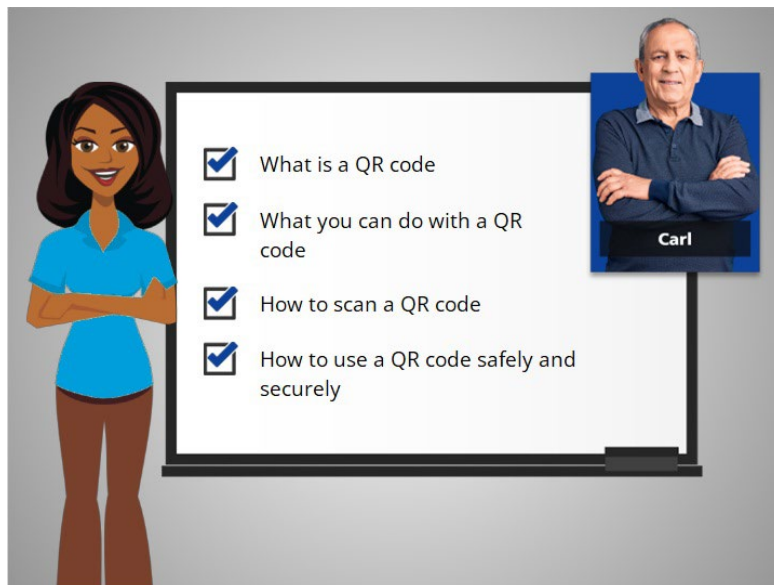Set up a fraud alert and credit freeze.

Inform your bank and monitor your accounts for unusual activity.

Scan your device for malware and spyware.

To learn more, watch the AT&T Connected Learning course Online Fraud and Scams.

In this course, we followed along with Carl as he learned how to use QR codes, including what a QR code is, what you can do with it, how to scan it, and how to use it safely and securely. Why don't you try exploring QR codes on your own!