

Good Housekeeping

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Great Holiday Shopping Online - Net the best prices and return policies

<http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/heloise/holiday-tips/online-holiday-gift-shopping>

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The perks of online shopping are obvious — no slick roads, long register lines, or parking nightmares — but you have to be careful. In your haste to click "complete order" you can overpay or get stuck with the wrong stuff. Here's how to be a smart and safe shopper.

Related Links

[10 Ways to Spend Less in Stores](#) [25 Days of Savings](#) [Save \\$300 in 3 Days](#) [Cut Your Grocery Bill in Half!](#) [Summer Sales -- Up to 70% Off!](#)

Save Big

Do online research to find the best-performing products. [Goodhousekeeping.com](#) is the go-to site for the Good Housekeeping Research Institute's reviews. Looking for electronics? Try the brand-new [reviewed.com](#), which rates camcorders, digital cameras, printers, and cell phones, and the excellent old standby [cnet.com](#), especially for computers.

Use comparison-shopping Websites to snag great deals. These online pages price products from all over the Web. [Pronto.com](#) is especially comprehensive, with 70 million items from 65,000 online stores. It can call up a list of, say, 4,975 blenders that you can then narrow down by price, brand, and desired features. [Shopping.com](#) has really helpful consumer reviews. [Thefind.com](#) tracks the top-selling online styles and brands.

Search for Web-wide discounts and coupon codes. Stop at [fatwallet.com](#) for up to 50 percent off sites ranging from ones for the Apple Store to Banana Republic. [Discountcodes.com](#) constantly updates the latest coupon codes to enter on the checkout screen at hundreds of e-stores. And if you're fishing for fashion, visit [reesycakes.com](#), which has 600 coupon codes for merchants like Bergdorf Goodman, J.Crew, and Scoop NYC.

Hold out if you can. The trick is to wait as long as possible for the lowest prices — but to avoid missing an item you really want or ordering so late that the rush-shipping cost cancels any savings. (And be sure to check a site's holiday-shipping cutoff dates: One year, I took advantage of an e-mail offer and ordered our daughter Holiday Barbie from [walmart.com](#). But we were traveling for Christmas, and Barbie hadn't arrived before we left. In a panic, I found the doll at a store and bought it.)

Try to get a refund if the present sells for less after you buy it. Sign up at priceprotectr.com, and if the cost of your product drops anytime during the price-protection period after you buy from one of its 46 listed sites, you will receive an e-mail explaining exactly how to get a refund for the item. In a recent *Good Housekeeping* test of five hypothetical purchases, PriceProtectr e-mailed us three price drops — from \$5 to \$85 — within a single week.