A PARENT'S GUIDE · UPDATED NOVEMBER 2026

Understanding Deepfake Images

What nudify apps are, what changed in 2026, and what to do if your child is targeted.

More and more teens, especially girls, are being targeted with fake nude images made by AI. The images may be fake, but the harm is real. This guide covers the facts, the new laws, the conversations that matter most, and a step-by-step plan if it ever happens to your family.

THE COMMON PARENT

WITH CAT & NAT

THE BASICS · 01

What are deepfake images?

Deepfakes are photos, videos, or audio created or altered with artificial intelligence (AI) to look real.

Some are harmless, like a funny face swap. But AI is increasingly being misused to create sexual images of real people without their consent, including teenagers.

The tools that do this are often called "nudify" or "undress" apps. They take an ordinary photo, like a school picture, a sports team shot, or an Instagram selfie, and generate a fake nude or nearly nude version in seconds. No real intimate photo is needed.

> **That's the part many parents and teens don't realize: being careful about what you post is no longer enough on its own.**

The images may be fake, but the harm is real. Victims often face humiliation, bullying, anxiety, and the fear that the image will never fully go away. The images can also be used for sextortion, where someone threatens to share them unless the victim sends money or more images.

THE LATEST · 02

What's changed in 2026

The Grok scandal brought it into the open

In late December 2025 and January 2026, people used Grok, the AI chatbot built into X, to put real women and girls into bikinis, see-through clothing, and sexualized poses, then posted the images publicly. Researchers found some appeared to show minors. Several countries temporarily blocked Grok, regulators in the UK, France, Ireland, and California opened investigations, and families, including three Tennessee teens, have sued xAI. xAI says it has since restricted these edits.

NEW **New U.S. removal rules are now in force**

Under the federal Take It Down Act, as of May 19, 2026, social media, messaging, and image-sharing platforms must remove intimate images shared without consent, including AI-made fakes, within 48 hours of a valid request. If a platform doesn't act, you can report it to the Federal Trade Commission at TakeItDown.ftc.gov.

NEW **Canada updated its law**

Canada's Protecting Victims Act received Royal Assent on June 18, 2026. It makes it a crime to share AI-generated or altered intimate images, including "nearly nude" images, that could pass for a real photo of someone, and to threaten to share them.

> **Images of anyone under 18 are already illegal. In both countries, sexual images of a minor count as child sexual abuse material, even if AI made it. "It's just a joke" or "it's not real" is not a defence.**

App stores are cracking down, slowly

After reports found dozens of nudify apps in Apple's and Google's stores, Apple removed a batch in July 2026 and updated its rules to ban apps that create intimate images of people without consent. Google has also removed some. But these tools still pop up on websites and get rebranded, so they haven't gone away.

Schools are being hit hard

A Wired investigation in April 2026 found nudify deepfakes had been reported at nearly 90 schools in 28 countries, affecting at least 600 students. In the UK, criminals have even scraped photos from school websites to make fake abuse images and then demanded money, leading some schools to remove student photos online.

BY THE NUMBERS · 03

The impact on teens

Research from Thorn, a nonprofit that fights child sexual abuse online, shows how common this has become.

1 in 8
young people ages 13 to 20 personally know someone targeted by deepfake nudes

1 in 17
say they have been targeted themselves

7%
of teens have seen a deepfake nude of another child (Thorn, July 2026)

In Thorn's newest youth survey, published July 2026, 1 in 25 teens said they had been the victim of an AI deepfake nude.

There's another finding worth knowing. In that same survey, 15% of kids said they turned to an AI chatbot after an online sexual interaction, rather than a person. Many young people also told no one at all. That's a strong reason to make sure your child knows they can come to you.

The harm goes well beyond embarrassment. Victims describe anxiety, shame, losing friendships, avoiding school, and fearing the image will resurface for years.

Why is this happening?

It's easy
Nudify tools are advertised on social media, turn up in searches, and work in seconds with a single photo. Some are built into mainstream AI chatbots.

It feels anonymous
Kids may think they can't be traced, or that a fake image doesn't count.

Many teens don't know the rules
Lots of young people don't realize that making or sharing these images can be a crime, especially when the person pictured is under 18.

"It's not real" thinking
Some teens believe a fake image can't really hurt anyone. Victims say otherwise.

Who is doing it?

In the school cases reported so far, most targets have been girls and most of the people making the images have been boys, often classmates. Experts point to peer pressure, toxic online communities, and treating it as a prank rather than a serious violation.

This isn't about labelling boys as the problem. It's about making sure every child, especially sons, understands consent, the real harm these images cause, and the serious consequences of making or sharing them. Adults also use these images to target kids, including in sextortion scams.

PREVENTION · 04

What can parents do to protect teens?

Talk about it before it happens

Bring up the Grok story or a school case in the news and ask what they've heard. Explain that AI can now make fake images so realistic that most people can't tell the difference, so "spot the fake" isn't a reliable defence anymore. What matters is knowing what to do.

Be clear about the law and the harm

Make sure your teen knows that making, asking for, or sharing a sexual image of someone under 18 is illegal, even if it's fake and even as a joke. Forwarding one counts too.

Talk about consent and being an upstander

Ask, "How would you feel if this happened to you or your best friend?" Teach them that if a friend is making or sharing these images, saying something, refusing to pass it on, and telling an adult all help. Staying silent lets the harm spread.

Reduce how many photos are out there

Keep social media accounts private, limit followers to people they actually know, and turn off photo tagging where possible. Think about how many clear, identifiable photos of your child are public, including on school, team, and club pages, and your own accounts. You can ask schools and clubs to limit or remove them.

Check where their images show up

Try a reverse image search on Google or TinEye now and then to see whether your child's photos appear anywhere unexpected.

Watch for warning signs

Sudden withdrawal, anxiety, avoiding school or friends, deleting social media, or panic over their phone can all be signs something is wrong. Ask gently and calmly.

> **Make the no-blame promise. If a fake image of them ever appears, or someone threatens them with one, it is not their fault, they won't be in trouble, and you'll handle it together.**
>
> Kids who expect to be blamed often stay silent.

COMMUNITY · 05

Working with your school and community

Ask your school whether its bullying and harassment policies specifically cover AI-generated sexual images, and what happens when a student is targeted. Ask how student photos are used on the school website and social media, and whether you can opt out. Encourage your school or parent council to host a session on digital safety and AI, so every family hears the same message.

RESPONSE PLAN · 06

If it happens: your family response plan

Stay calm and lead with reassurance. Your child's first reaction will shape whether they keep telling you things.

01 **Reassure them.**

It's not their fault, and you're going to handle this together.

02 **Don't share the image, and don't pay.**

Don't forward it, even to show someone. If someone is demanding money or more images, stop replying and don't pay.

03 **Save the evidence.**

Write down usernames, links, dates, and where it was posted, and take screenshots of messages and profiles (not of the image itself).

04 **Report it to the platform.**

Every major app has a reporting tool. In the U.S., platforms must now remove these images within 48 hours of a valid request.

05 **Use a removal tool.**

For anyone under 18, these services can help get images removed and blocked from being re-uploaded.

U.S. → takeitdown.ncmec.org **Canada → needhelpnow.ca**

06 **Report it.**

Contact local police, especially if your child is being threatened.

Canada → cybertip.ca **U.S. → report.cybertip.org**

07 **Tell the school.**

If classmates are involved, let the school know and ask how they'll respond.

08 **Get support.**

This can be deeply upsetting. A counsellor or therapist can help your child work through it. If your child is in crisis, call or text 988 (Canada and U.S.), or in Canada contact Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868.

CONVERSATION · 07

Scripts: get your teen talking

"Have you heard about the Grok thing, where people used AI to make fake pictures of real girls? What do you think about that?"

"Has anything like that happened at your school, or have you heard kids talk about nudify apps?"

"If someone made a fake picture of you or a friend, what would you do? Would you feel okay telling me?"

"I want you to know that if that ever happened, it wouldn't be your fault and you wouldn't be in trouble. We'd figure it out together."

"Why do you think some kids think making these is a joke? What would you say to a friend who did it?"

"Did you know that sharing a fake nude of someone under 18 is illegal, even if it's just forwarded? What do you think would happen at school?"

"If someone ever tries to scare you or pressure you with a picture, real or fake, don't reply and don't pay. Come straight to me."

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