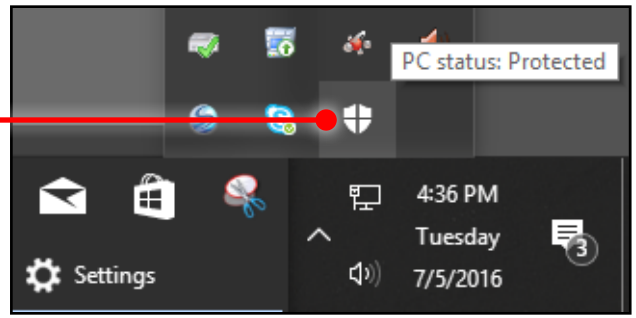
Quick start: Windows Defender

Windows 10

Windows Defender helps keep your device safe from malicious or unwanted software. It's always on, protecting you, and pretty much runs by itself. You could just stop reading now.

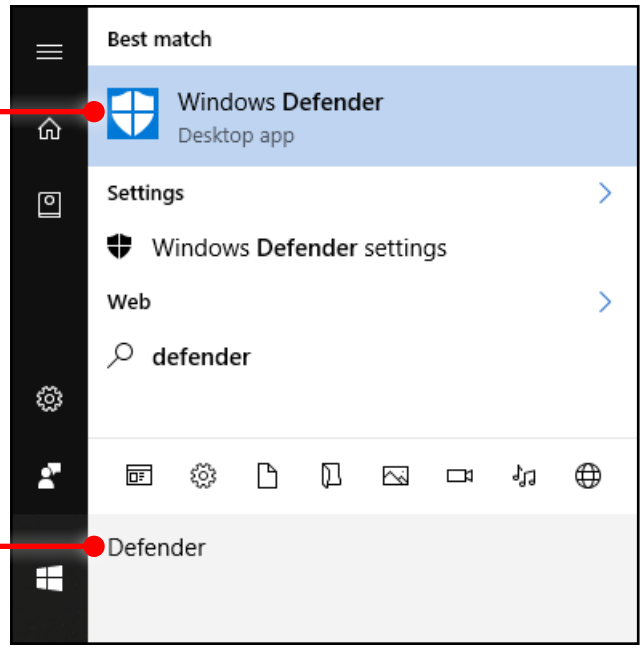
How do you know it's running?

In the lower-right corner of the desktop, select the **Show hidden icons** ^, and then hover over the Windows Defender icon. You'll see a message that says **PC status: Protected**.



Here's how to open it

In the search box on the taskbar, type **Defender** and then select **Windows Defender** from the list of results.



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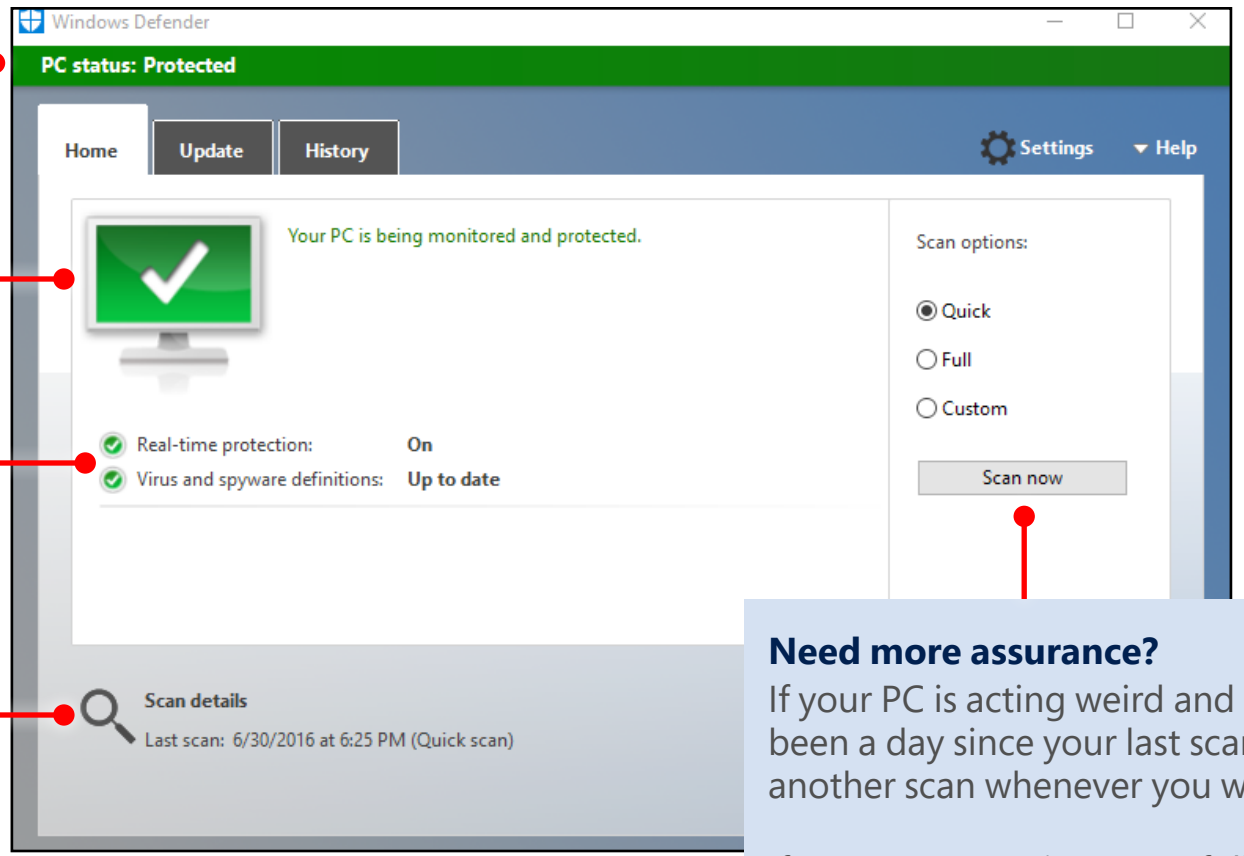
Get oriented

Confidence at a glance
Green means all systems go!

When was the last scan?



Need more assurance?
If your PC is acting weird and it's been a day since your last scan, run another scan whenever you want.

If you suspect a virus, try a full scan.

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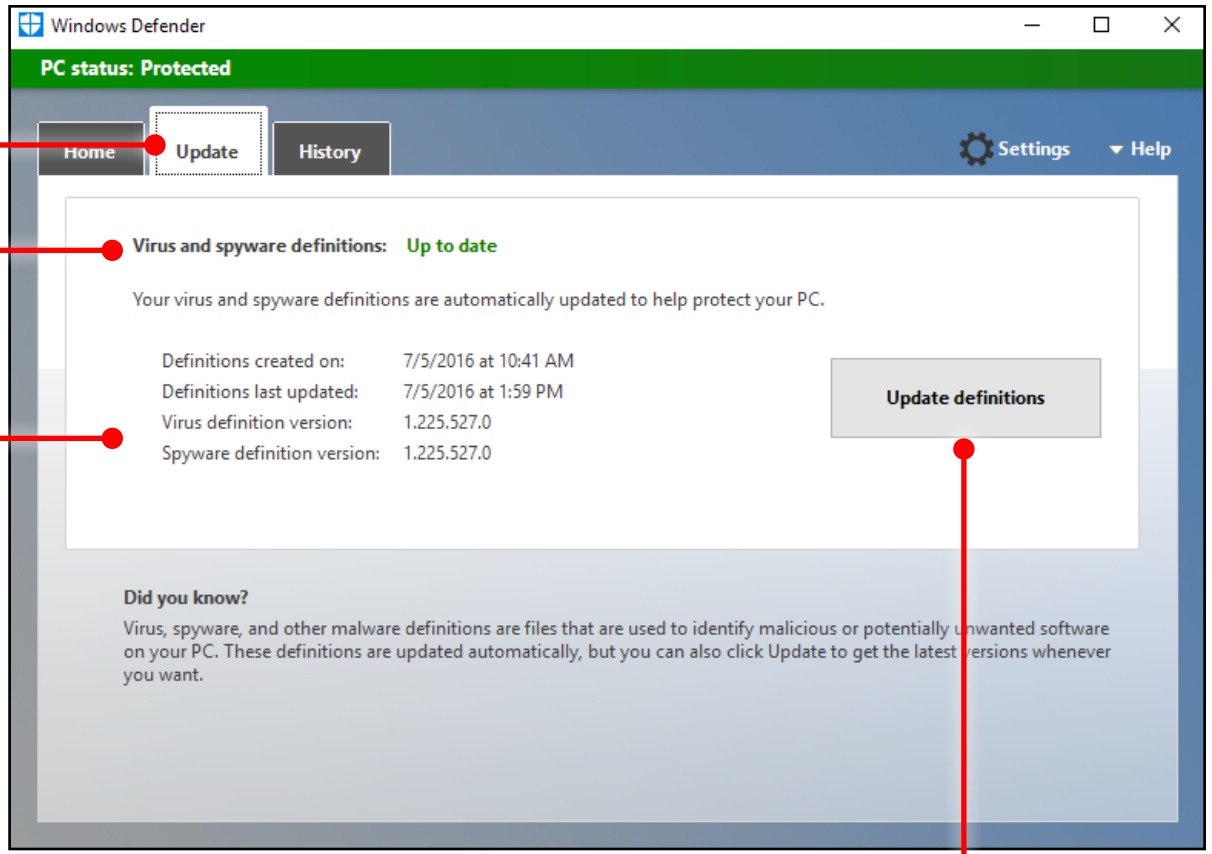
Updates just happen

Select the Update tab to see what's up

Updates are automatic
They arrive through Windows Update.

When was the last update?



If you're going to do a scan...
Look for a newer update first.

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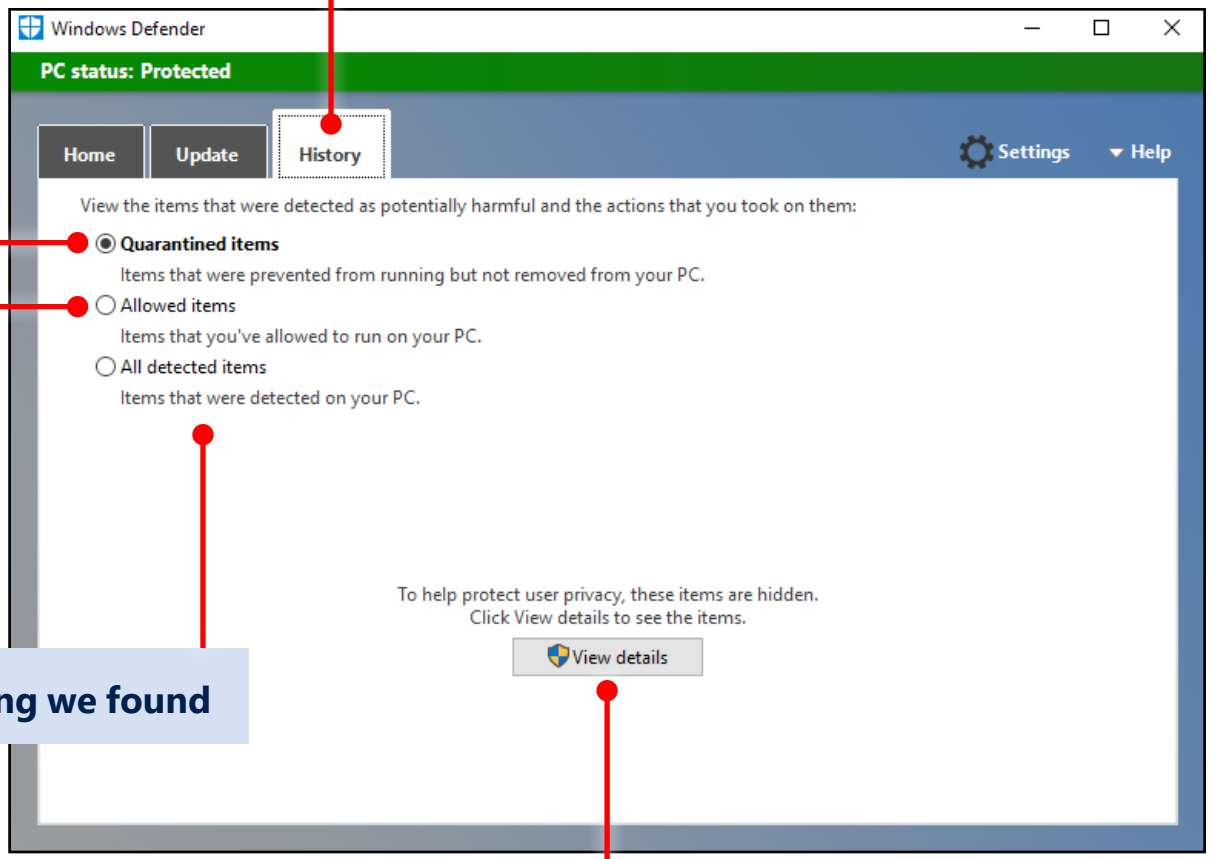
Make sense of the present by understanding the past

Why was something blocked?
Select the **History** tab.

What's in quarantine?
You'll find malicious software here.

What's been allowed?
Each thing you decided was OK is listed here.



Everything we found

Get info about the stuff that was found

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Dig deep with Settings

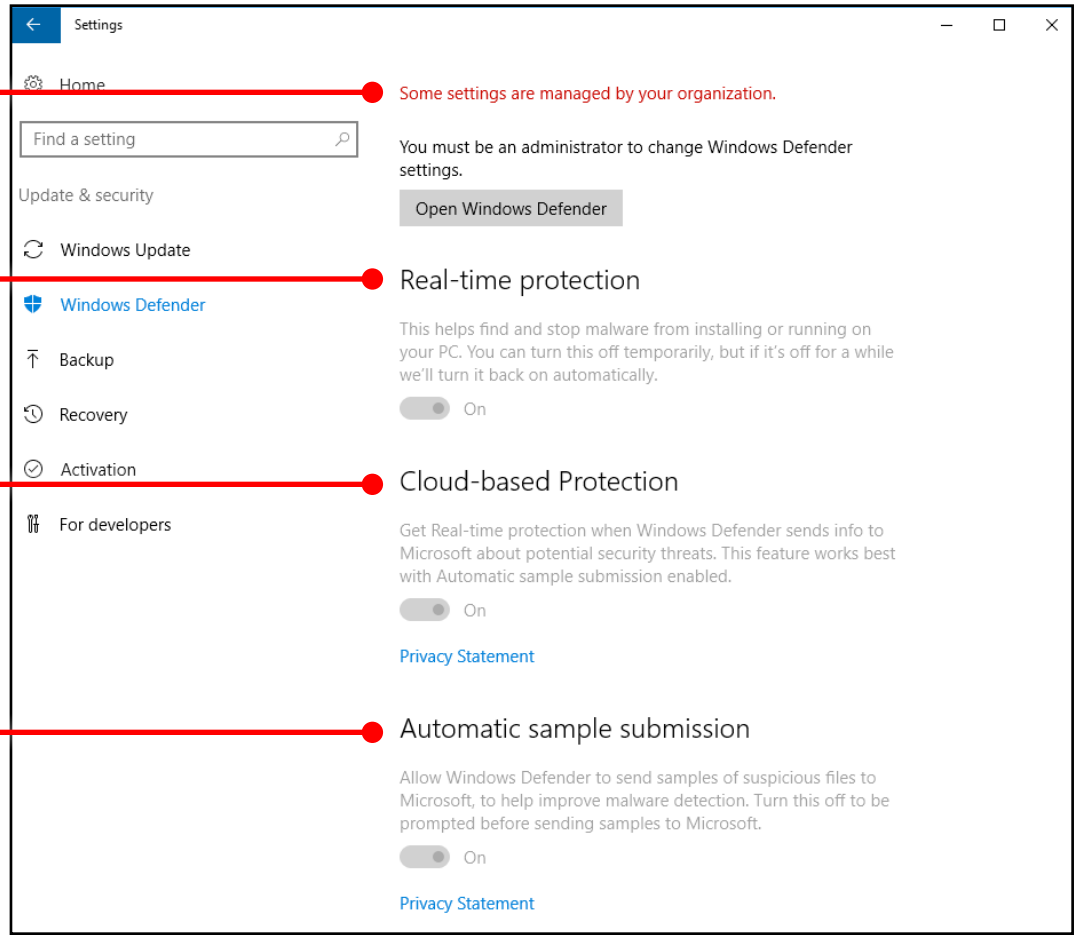
If you like to get under the hood and customize, there are ways to improve the security of Windows Defender. (Or you can choose to make it less secure, but we don't recommend it.) All the knobs you can tweak are found in the Settings app.

If you're at work...
You might not be able to change everything.

If you're asked to turn off your antivirus software...
You need to be 100% confident you know and trust who is asking.

You're better protected...
When you choose to share info with us.

Read the Privacy Statement to understand how we use the info.



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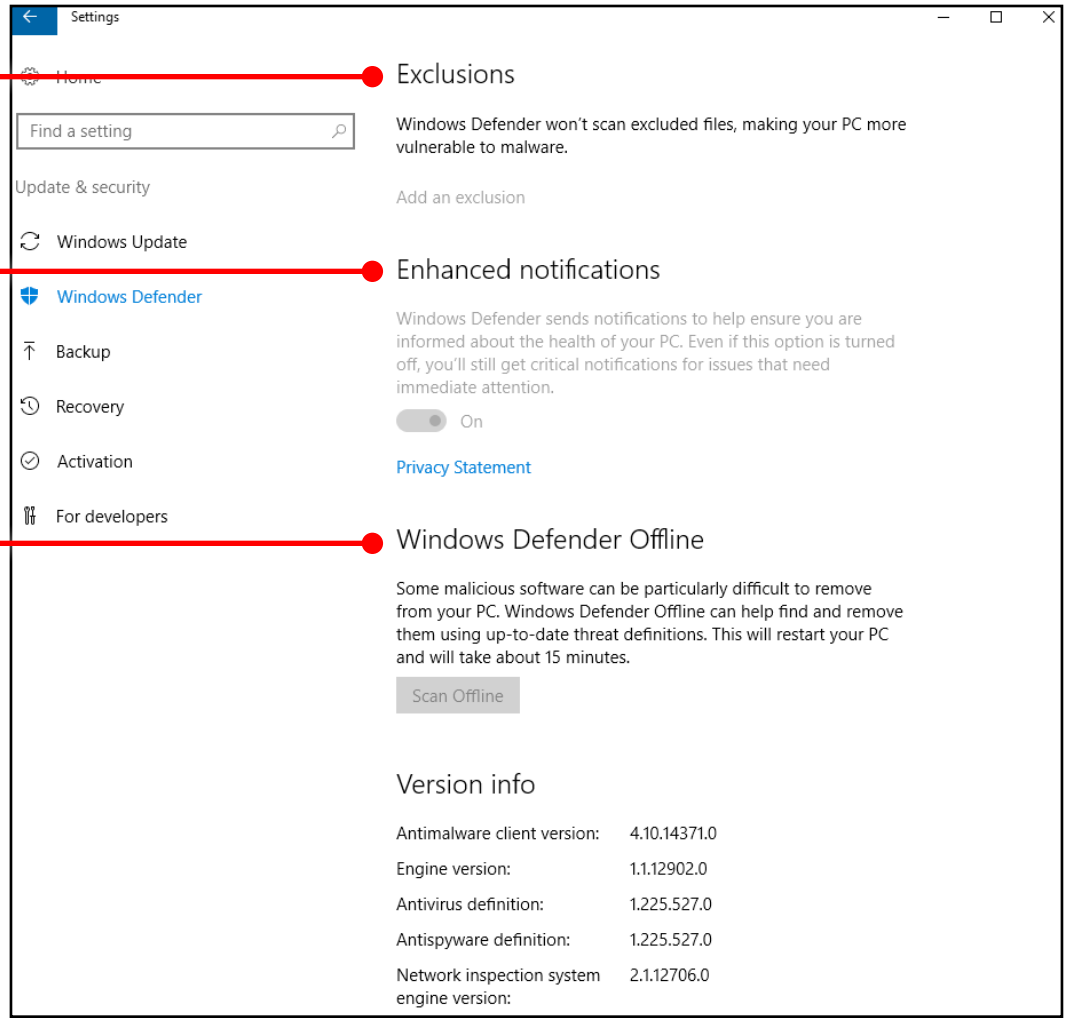
Dig even deeper with Settings

Keep scrolling the Settings page and you'll find even more to tailor.

Be careful with this
You might have good reasons to exclude specific files from a scan, so we give you the power (just be careful, please).

Want fewer notices?
We get it. But we'll still notify you when it's crucial.

If a regular scan isn't possible or is risky...
Try running a scan offline.



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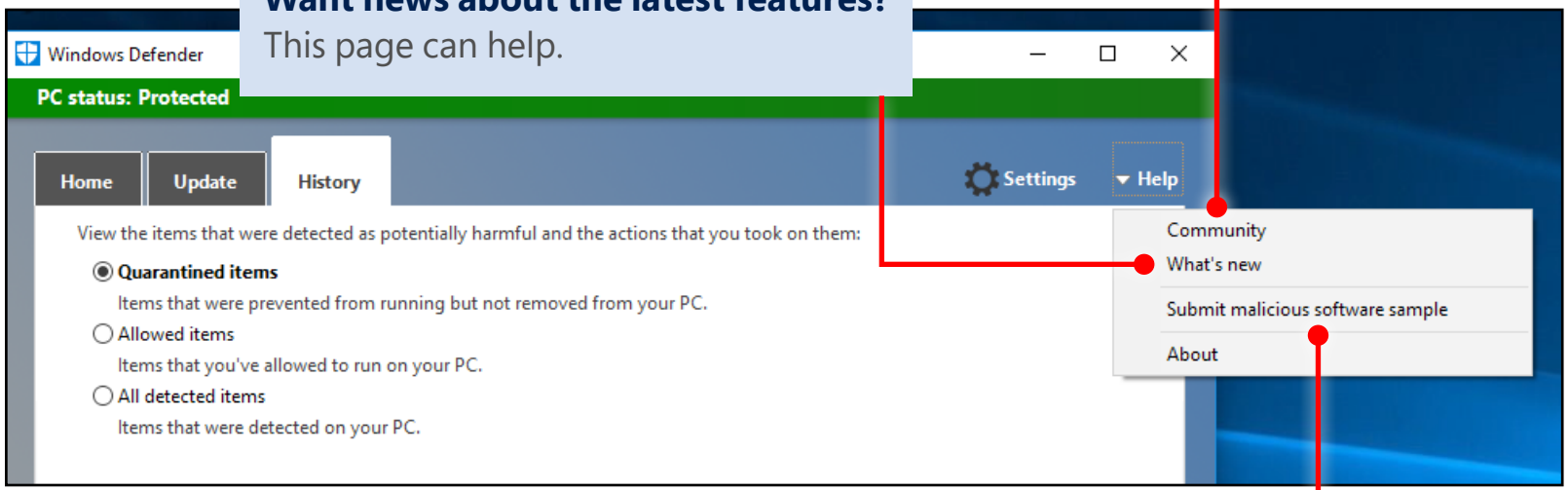
Got a problem you can't fix yourself? Find help.

Ask the community
Other people have probably had the same problem, and there are folks in our online community willing to give you a hand.

Want news about the latest features?
This page can help.



You might be asked to send a sample
This can help us identify and fix the problem.