

# Change this setting now to prevent email data leaks!

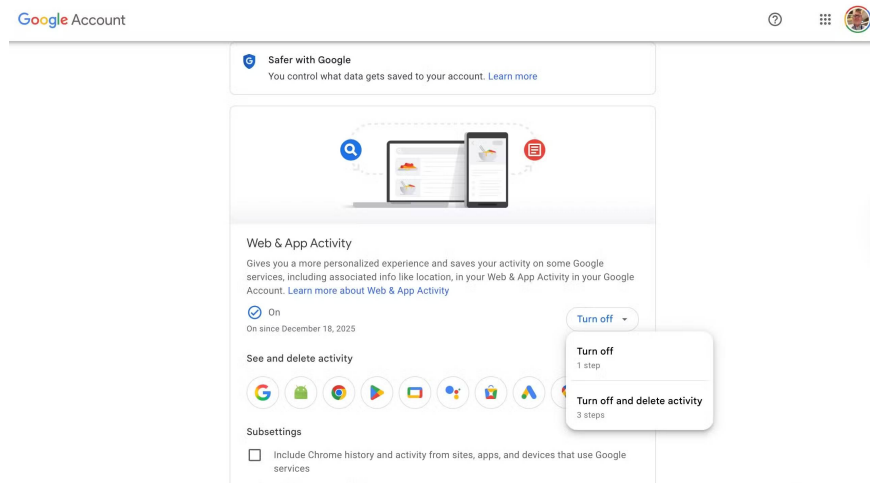
If you still prefer using Gmail but are concerned about how your data is being used, you can adjust a few privacy settings.

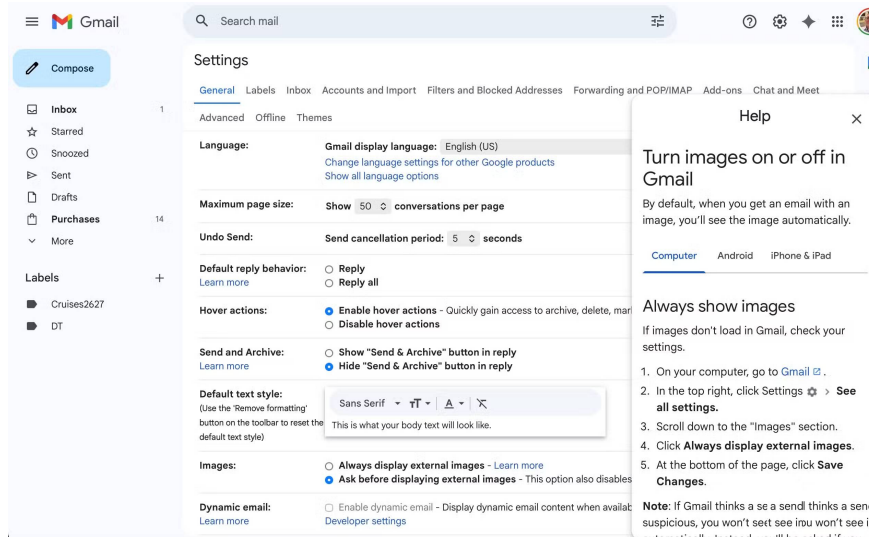
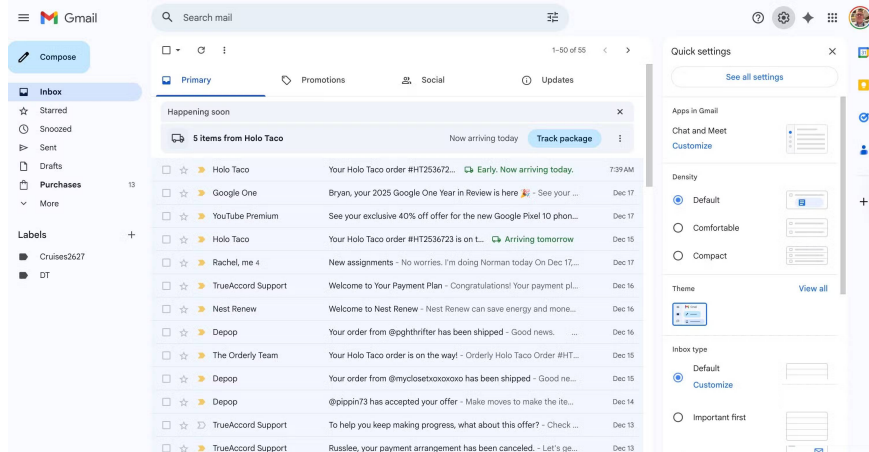
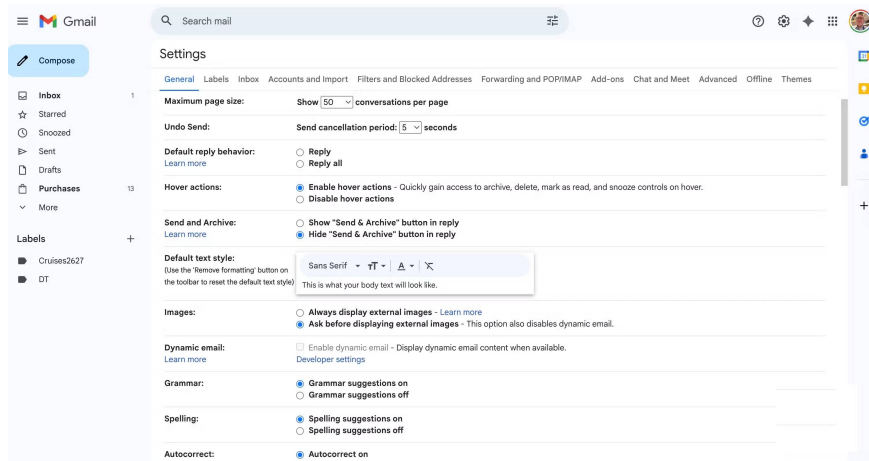
Gmail is the world's most popular and convenient email service, but it comes with privacy trade-offs. Google collects information about how you interact with your emails, such as when and on what device you open messages. This is designed to improve features like spam detection and smart replies. While the company no longer scans individual messages for ads, this activity data still shapes your overall user experience, raising legitimate privacy concerns.

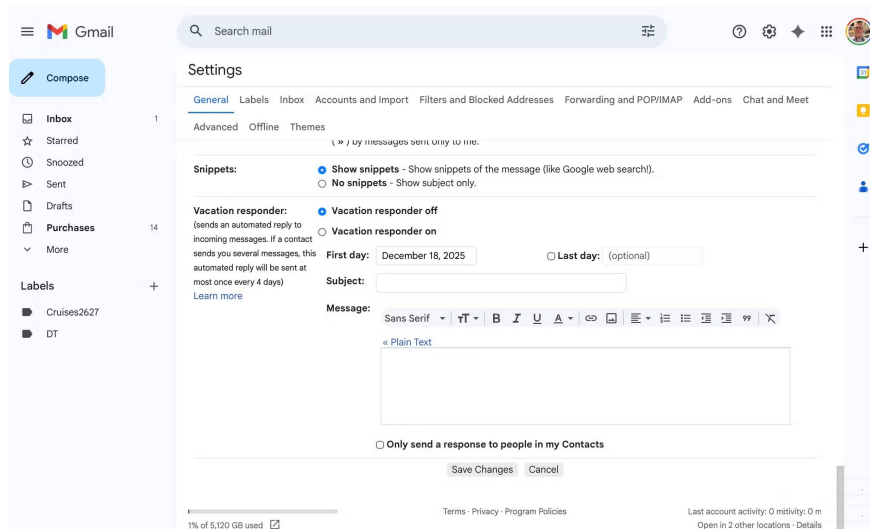
These concerns are why many people switch to a different email app. If you still prefer using Gmail but are concerned about how your data is being used, you can adjust a few privacy settings.

## Limit email tracking

A single setting can vary greatly.







The easiest way to prevent marketers from tracking when and where you open emails is to enable Gmail's "Ask before showing external images" feature. When enabled, Gmail won't automatically load images, blocking the tiny tracking pixels often hidden in marketing emails. This simple change can protect your privacy and reduce the risk of potential malware from unknown senders.

Image tracking pixels are invisible 1x1 images in emails, websites, or advertisements that, when uploaded, send requests to a server to record user data. This includes information such as the user's IP address, device, location, and time, allowing marketers to track opens, views, conversions, and behavior. This often raises privacy concerns, which are mitigated by blocking images or using ad blockers.

After enabling the "Ask before showing external images" setting, Gmail will no longer automatically load images. Instead, you'll see a "Show images below" prompt in each email, allowing you to choose which images you want to see. This gives you better control and prevents unwanted tracking pixels from intruding.

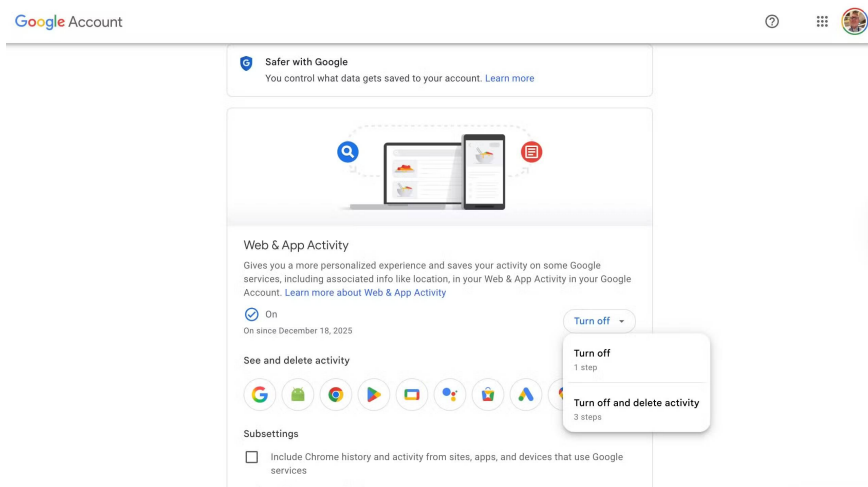
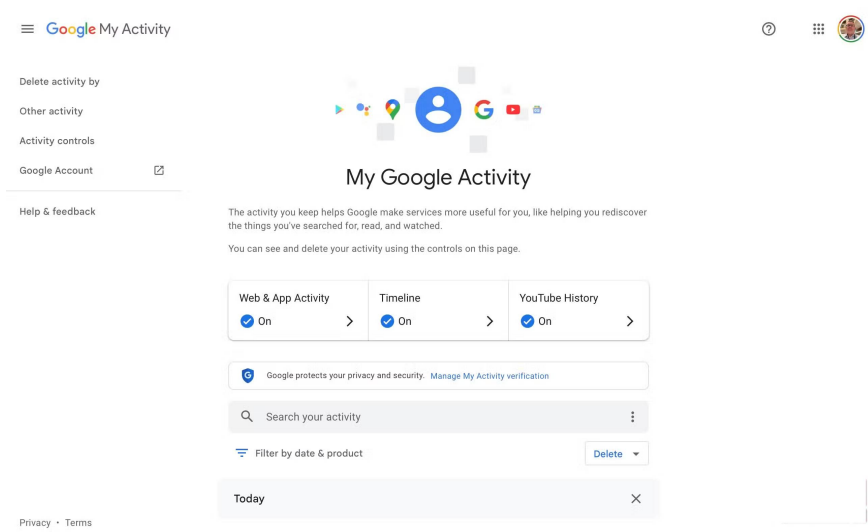
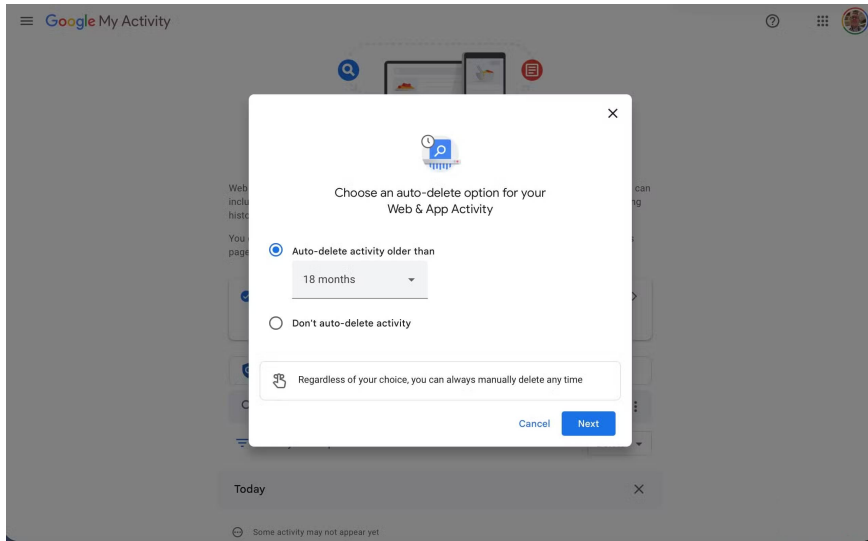
To enable the new setting, open Gmail in your web browser, select the **Settings** icon in the upper right corner, then click **Show all settings**. Scroll down to the **Images section and turn on the Ask before displaying external images** option. Select **Save Changes** at the bottom of the screen.

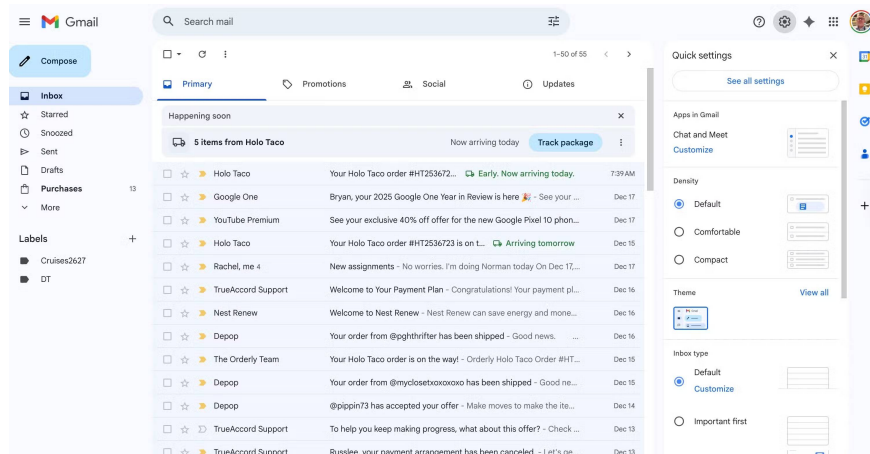
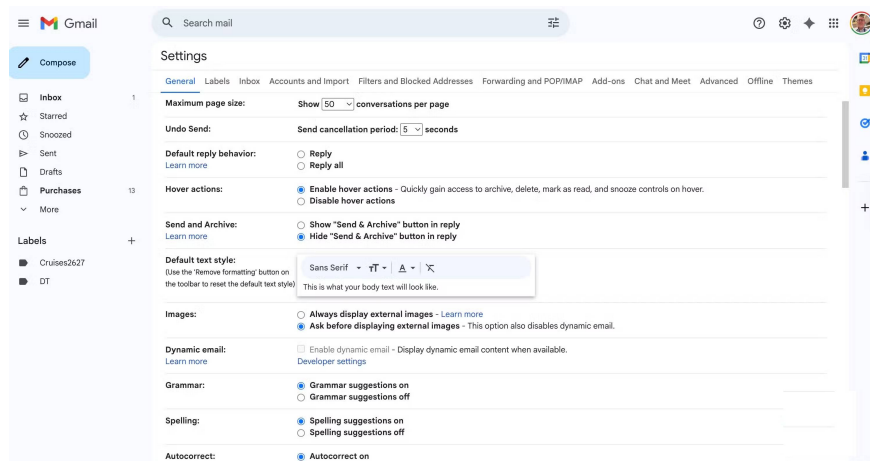
## Main limitations

The "Ask before showing external images" setting in Gmail only applies to Gmail on the web and the Gmail app on iOS and Android, and not to third-party apps.

## "Automatically delete" your emails

**This is another useful tool to try.**





There are several other ways you can better protect the data in your Gmail account, starting with a few proactive privacy settings.

Let's start by reviewing Gmail's data retention and activity settings. Google's My Activity and Data & Privacy tools allow you to view, manage, and personalize the data collected across their services. If you don't need them, you can turn off Web & App Activity and location tracking settings. You can also enable automatic deletion for older emails and activity logs.

To adjust these settings, go to the Activity Controls page in your Google account. After signing in, turn off **Web & App Activity** and **Location History** if needed. On that same page, you can also set your data to be automatically deleted every 3, 18, or 36 months instead of being stored indefinitely.

Keep in mind that Gmail doesn't have a built-in option to automatically delete old emails. However, you can create a simple filter to do this, or use a third-party cleanup tool.

To create a filter to delete emails older than 2 years:

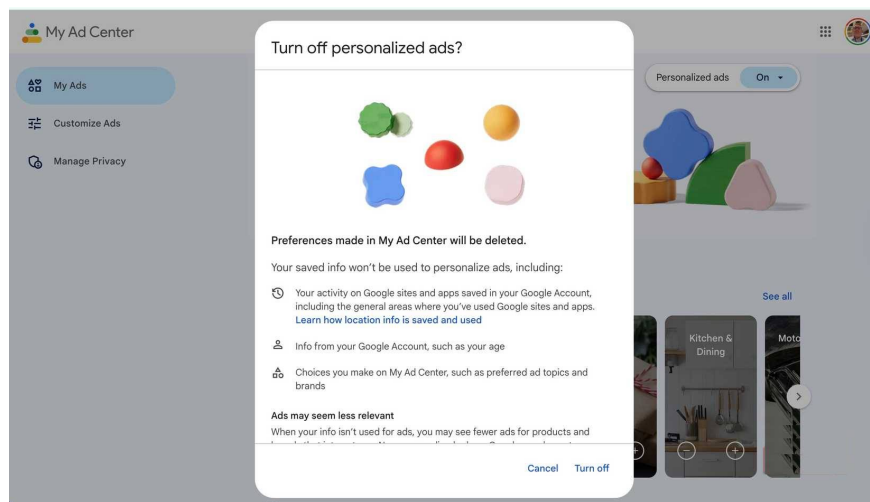
1. In Gmail on the web, open the search bar and select **Show search options**.
2. In the "**Has the words**" field, enter ``older_than:2y``, then select "**Create filter**".
3. Select **Delete it** and confirm by selecting **Create filter** again.

Once the filter is activated, emails older than two years will automatically be moved to the Trash and permanently deleted after 30 days.

There are other Gmail filters you should consider using to improve your email workflow.

## Reduce personalized advertising.

### Another tool to consider.



Turning off Gmail's ad personalization is also helpful. When you do this, marketers will have less information about you.

To begin, open My Ad Center in Google while signed in to your account. Switch the **Personalized ads** option to **Off** and confirm. Once completed, Google will no longer be able to use your information, activity, and preferences across certain services, including YouTube, Search, and Maps.

If you still want to see ads but want to adjust them, you can make changes in My Ad Center. From there, go to **Customize Ads** to adjust the topics or brands displayed, or to limit sensitive content.

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