

Safely Removing Those USB Devices: Don't Just Yank!

USB devices are flooding the market. Digital cameras, media players, external drives - all of them use the USB port. Newer computers have a port or two right up front for removable devices. Some flat panel monitors also have these ports on the side as do some of the newer keyboards.

After you plug in the device, just don't pull the plug to disconnect it!

Even though USB devices are Plug & Play, that is, they're ready to go upon being plugged in, you shouldn't just unplug them. A USB port has current running through it, so the power jolt caused by unplugging a "hot" connection can corrupt data on a storage device, camera, or mp3 player.

You can prevent such problems by clicking the "Safely Remove Hardware" button down in the system tray (by the clock). It looks like a rectangle with a green arrow pointing down at 8 o'clock.

You'll be given a list of USB devices that are active. Highlight the one you want to remove and click. When the power shuts off, Windows will tell you that it is safe to remove the device.

*Courtesy of the Mid Hudson Regional Information Center