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The WhatsApp link on your site does not work: wa.me problems and fixes

WhatsApp & APIs

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The WhatsApp link on your site does not work: wa.me problems and fixes

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When your site's WhatsApp button does not open the right chat, the cause is almost always the **link format**: a number with symbols, an address without the `https://`, or text that was not encoded. Open the link in a browser and see what happens: the symptom tells you the cause.

The right format

```
https://wa.me/NUMBER
https://wa.me/NUMBER?text=Hello%2C%20I%20saw%20the%20site
```

NUMBER is the full number, **with the country code and digits only**: no plus sign, no spaces, no hyphens, no brackets and no leading zeros. The text comes after `?text=`, encoded.

The symptom and the cause

What you see	Likely cause	Fix
The link opens a page of your own site (a 404)	You wrote `wa.me/...` without the `https://`. The browser treats it as a page on your domain.	Write the full address, starting with `https://`.
A message saying the phone number is invalid	A number with symbols, spaces, zeros or no country code; or a number that is not on WhatsApp.	Digits only, with the country code. Check that the number has WhatsApp.
It opens, but with someone else's number	A wrong number, or the link was copied from elsewhere.	Check digit by digit and open it on a phone that is not yours.
The message appears cut off or with odd symbols	The text was not encoded: accents, spaces, &, # and line breaks.	Encode the text (space `%20`, line break `%0A`, `&` `%26`). An online URL encoder does it.

What you see	Likely cause	Fix
On a computer, it opens a page asking you to download the app	This is expected if you have neither WhatsApp nor WhatsApp Web linked.	Not an error. People with WhatsApp Web open carry on from there.
Works in the browser, but not inside Instagram or Facebook	Those apps' built-in browser may not open the outside app.	Also offer the number written out, or ask people to "open in browser".

Testing, step by step

1. **Paste the link into a browser's address bar**, rather than only clicking the site's button. If it works there, the problem is in the button.

2. **Open the button's code.** In your site editor (WordPress, File Manager), look at the address written in the `href`. Look for the `https://` at the start.

3. **If you use a floating-button plugin**, the number sits in a settings box. Fix it there, in the right format, and clear the page cache.

4. **If the text carries an address or &**, in HTML you write `&` inside the `href` attribute. A page-builder plugin usually handles that for you.

5. **Test on a phone and a computer**, after clearing the browser cache and, if the site uses page caching, the site's too.

The number must really be on WhatsApp.
A landline that was never registered, an old number or a one-digit slip gives "invalid". If you changed number, change the button, the QR and the signature too: **a WhatsApp QR code**.

Write the ready-made message with care.
A short sentence without symbols beats an encoded paragraph. For the one-message-per-page idea, see **putting WhatsApp on your site**.

NEED A HAND?

The button still fails? Send us the page address and the link the button uses, without personal data.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **Putting WhatsApp on your site: the link, the button and the ready-written message**
- **A QR code that opens a chat with you**
- **Filling in your WhatsApp Business profile**
- **WhatsApp and your online shop**

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