

Tips to Avoid Coronavirus Scams

Don't fall victim to a scam!

The Coronavirus is not only causing physical harm to people's health, but also financial harm as scam artists are trying to take advantage of vulnerable people. Scammers are preying on fears surrounding the Coronavirus to obtain money and financial information. These scams come in all different forms including emails, texts and social media posts. Below are some helpful tips to avoid falling for a Coronavirus scam.

- **Don't respond to texts, emails or calls about checks from the government.**
- **Ignore online offers for vaccinations.** There are no products proven to treat or prevent COVID-19 at this time.
- **Be wary of ads for test kits.** The [FDA just announced](#) approval for one home test kit, which requires a doctor's order. Most test kits being advertised have not been approved by the FDA, and may not be accurate.
- **Hang up on robocalls.** Scammers are using [illegal robocalls](#) to pitch everything from low-priced health insurance to work-at-home schemes.
- **Watch for emails claiming to be from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or World Health Organization (WHO).** Use sites like [coronavirus.gov](#) and [usa.gov/coronavirus](#) to get the latest information. And don't click on links from sources you don't know.
- Do your homework when it comes to donations. Never donate in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money.
- **Do not give your Medicare number to anyone other than your doctor or other healthcare provider.**

Source: Federal Trade Commission

Report Coronavirus Scams

How to report:

- Contact the U.S. Department of Justice's [National Elder Fraud Hotline](#) at 833-FRAUD-11 (833-372-8311). The hotline is staffed by counselors and case-managers every day 6am to 11pm.
- [File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission.](#) Reports go into the FTC's Consumer Sentinel Database, and are shared with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. (Data from Coronavirus-related consumer complaints submitted to the FTC is available at [ftc.gov/exploredata](#)).
- If it's a cyber scam, [file an Internet Crime Complaint with the FBI.](#)

Adult Protective Services and Older Americans Act legal assistance programs can also support people who have been targeted by scams. Contact AgeGuide if you need assistance at (800) 528-2000

Source: Administration on Community Living

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program empowers consumers to prevent healthcare fraud. Program staff and volunteers help people with Medicare and Medicaid to:

1. PROTECT themselves from Medicare & Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse.
2. DETECT Medicare & Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse.
3. REPORT Medicare & Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program works to ensure fewer people become victims of healthcare fraud. With training and support from the Illinois SMP Program and its partners, SMP volunteers provide outreach and education in their communities. By giving presentations to groups, hosting exhibits at community events, and providing one-on-one counseling, volunteers help spread the message of Protect, Detect, and Report healthcare fraud.

[Coronavirus Tip Sheet](#)

[Coronavirus Tip Sheet \(Spanish\)](#)

For more information or to volunteer for Senior Medicare Patrol at AgeGuide contact Glenda Love at 630-293-5990 or glove@ageguide.org.

Other Resources about Scams for Older Adults

Beware of Scams Related to the Coronavirus

consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/beware-coronavirus-related-scams

Avoid Scams while Finding Help during Quarantine

consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/04/avoid-scams-while-finding-help-during-quarantine

Coronavirus Scams Spread as Fraudsters Follow the Headlines

aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2020/coronavirus

To support our community while we shelter in place, AgeGuide will be sharing new resources each week to help older adults and their loved ones stay informed, healthy and connected. AgeGuide has also compiled resources to support older adult and families during COVID-19 on its website which will be updated regularly. To see our resource page, [click here](#).

AgeGuide Northeastern Illinois was established in 1974. Services funded or coordinated by AgeGuide meet the diverse needs of the most rapidly growing population in Illinois. Over 681,000 seniors age 60 and over live in the agency's eight-county service area:

DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties

AgeGuide | (630) 293-5990 | info@ageguide.org | www.ageguide.org
1910 S. Highland Ave, Suite 100
Lombard, IL 60148

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