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Be on the Lookout for Coronavirus Related Scams



Fraudulent emails and phone calls from scammers trying to get your personal information is nothing new, but there has been a dramatic increase in scams since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many sham companies claim they can prevent or even cure COVID-19. None of these claims are substantiated.

Other scammers claim they have products that are hard to get right now such as gloves, cleaning supplies or masks. Beware from where you order supplies as these scammers allow you to place your order and then you never receive the products or the prices for these products are marked up in excess of 10 times the normal amount. In addition, watch out for fake charities emerging and asking for donations for Coronavirus support. Other scammers are offering low-cost health coverage to help with Coronavirus. With the financial uncertainty of these times, some thieves are promising they can help you refinance your mortgage or help you get rid of your credit card debt. They claim that all they need is your bank account number and your social security number. Another well-known scam is the famous IRS call; however, there is a new twist to this call. Scammers are now calling saying they are from the IRS and they ask for your bank account number to deposit your federal stimulus check. Just remember, the IRS will never call you asking for your bank account number over the phone.

The following tips will help you avoid Coronavirus scams:

- Watch out for groups asking for money for Coronavirus victims
- Ignore phone calls or emails from people you do not know urging you to invest in certain stocks set to “explode” due to the Coronavirus
- Do not open links in emails unless you are sure of the sender
- Avoid online offers for vaccines or cures for Coronavirus as they are fraudulent

AARP offers a few different ways for people to be proactive in the face of these scammers. They have “Watchdog Alert” that you can sign up for which would give you bi-weekly updates on the latest scams to your email and/or phone. You can sign up at the following link:

<https://cp.email.aarp.org/fraudwatchsignup?intcmp=AE-SCM-FRD-SIGNUP>. They also have a fraud hotline (877-908-3360) if you suspect you have been the victim of a scam.

Times of crisis bring people together, but they also bring out the worst in some people. From price-gouging to information theft, you need to be proactive and mindful in order to protect yourself and your money. If something does not feel right, do not give out your personal information!

