



COVID -19 Scams

As the nation faces the current coronavirus concern, scammers are already finding ways to take advantage of us. A common tactic for these criminals is using fear to elicit a reaction from their would-be victims. The most common scams surrounding coronavirus are:

Medicare Test Kits: Medicare will NOT call asking if you want test kits. This is an attempt to get your money and/or private information.

Fake Cures: Currently, there is no cure or vaccine to treat coronavirus. Any claims that suggest otherwise are 100% false.

Impersonations:

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) does not go door-to-door gathering information about infectious diseases. If you encounter a person claiming to be from the CDC, contact your local police department.
- Health departments will not ask for your social security numbers when calling in regards to COVID-19 test results.

Economic Impact Payments: There are reports that people have been receiving phone calls, texts, emails and social media posts about the economic impact payment to citizens during the COVID-19 situation. There are scams trying to get your private information and/or get you to pay a small fee in order to receive it. If you receive a check in the mail, you can verify the authenticity of a U.S. Treasury check at the Bureau of the Fiscal Service Treasury Check Verification Application (TCVA) at <https://tcva.fiscal.treasury.gov/>. Most will have received their funds directly deposited into their banks. The IRS warns taxpayers that scammers might use the following tactics:

- Emphasize the words "Stimulus Check" or "Stimulus Payment." The official term is **economic impact payment**.
- Ask the taxpayer to sign over their economic impact payment check to them.
- Ask by phone, email, text or social media for verification of personal and/or banking information saying that the information is needed to receive or speed up their economic impact payment.
- Suggest that they can get a tax refund or economic impact payment faster by working on the taxpayer's behalf. This scam could be conducted through social media or even in person.
- Mail the taxpayer a bogus check, perhaps in an odd amount, then tell the taxpayer to call a number or verify information online in order to cash it.

Phishing emails: Recently, the Secret Service issued a warning about emails that appear to be sent from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The email contains a link that does NOT connect to the CDC or WHO. It is best to avoid opening emails from senders you do not know.

Counterfeit products/price gouging: Many consumers have reported false product descriptions and increased prices while shopping online. It is best to read reviews and look into the seller's history before clicking "buy now".

Phony fundraisers: The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) suggests researching charities before donating. You can verify nonprofits at [GivingMatters.com](https://www.givingmatters.com).