

# How to Protect Yourself From Coronavirus Related Scams and Fraud



As the number of coronavirus cases in the United States continues to increase, scammers have begun taking advantage of our fears and the misinformation surrounding the virus to profit from the pandemic. These schemes target COVID-19 patients and the general public alike – ranging from the sale of fake cures and vaccines, the impersonation of government officials, and the promotion of fake charitable organizations.

Here's what you need to know about the scams that are out there now and some tips to avoid being scammed during the outbreak:

## **You can't buy a coronavirus vaccine or cure.**

Advertisements for vaccines, preventative medications, curative treatments, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) have appeared across the internet. Fake companies claim to sell these products, but victims of these schemes do not receive the products after they place an order. In addition to charging their unsuspecting victims, these scammers will also steal personal and financial data such as credit card and Social Security numbers.

## **Looking to donate? Do your homework.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many people to support charitable organizations that provide aid for individuals and businesses impacted by the virus. Scammers are capitalizing on this generosity by creating fake charities that solicit donations from well-meaning individuals. These schemes can occur through online channels as well as phone calls or even door-to-door solicitation.

## **Watch out for fake emails and texts, too.**

Advertisements for vaccines, preventative medications, curative treatments, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) have appeared across the internet. Fake companies claim to sell these products, but victims of these schemes do not receive the products after they place an order. In addition to charging their unsuspecting victims, these scammers will also steal personal and financial data such as credit card and Social Security numbers.

## **Report any potentially fraudulent activity.**

While the current economic and public health situation evolves, bad actors will continue to adapt to exploit the pandemic. Only use trustworthy sources of information – such as legitimate, government websites – for the most up-to-date, fact-based information on COVID-19.

Reports of scams or attempted fraud should be reported to the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or [diaster@leo.gov](mailto:diaster@leo.gov). Reports can also be submitted to the FBI at [tips.fbi.gov](https://tips.fbi.gov), and cyber scams can be submitted through <https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>.