

# Coronavirus Scams

— What the FTC is Doing —

**[ftc.gov/coronavirus](https://ftc.gov/coronavirus)**

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FTC Division of Consumer & Business Education



AVOIDING

# Coronavirus Scams

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Tips from the FTC

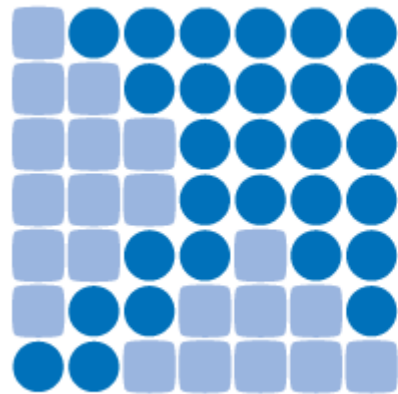
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[ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams](https://ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams)

Source: Federal Trade Commission | [FTC.gov](https://FTC.gov)

# Top COVID-related reports/complaints

- ▶ Online shopping
- ▶ Scam text messages
- ▶ Phone scams



**Explore  
Data**  
with the FTC

# Email/text scams & malicious websites

- ▶ **Phishing emails & texts**
  - ▶ Get your money
  - ▶ Get your information
  - ▶ Links to malware sites
- ▶ **Malicious websites**
  - ▶ Lots of domains including “Coronavirus”
  - ▶ Stick with known, trusted sites
- ▶ **Don’t click links from sources you don’t know**



# Imposter scams

- ▶ #1 fraud reported to Consumer Sentinel in 2019
- ▶ Government imposter scams:
  - ▶ Medicare
  - ▶ Relief payment messages
- ▶ Other imposters:
  - ▶ Family emergency
  - ▶ Tech support
  - ▶ Romance/Online dating
- ▶ FMI: Visit [ftc.gov/imposters](https://www.ftc.gov/imposters)

Oh, the stories scammers tell . . .

**Phony Social Security Administration** –  
*“Your Social Security number has been frozen, but we’ll help you keep your money ‘safe’!”*

**Health & Human Services/Medicare con** –  
*“Call now for your free back brace!”*

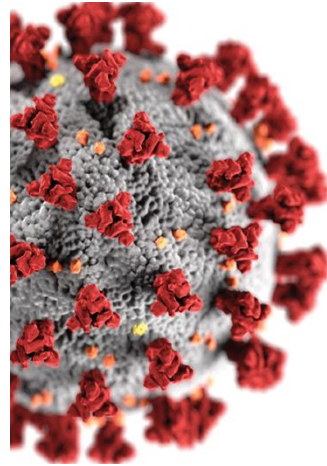
**IRS imposter** – *“There’s a lawsuit against you for unpaid taxes.”*

**Fake government grant offer** – *“You’re eligible for a government grant . . . for a fee.”*

**Bogus police, sheriff, or FBI** – *“There is a warrant for your arrest for failing to appear in court!”*

# Treatments & cures

- ▶ **Miracle cures**
- ▶ **Medicare-related scams**



*Coronavirus cure?*

**Not so fast.**

Learn the facts at  
**[ftc.gov/coronavirus](https://ftc.gov/coronavirus)**

Source: Federal Trade Commission | [FTC.gov](https://ftc.gov)



# Contact Tracing

## FTC Consumer Alerts:

- ▶ COVID-19 contact tracing text message scams
- ▶ Help COVID-19 contact tracers, not scammers

## Contact tracing call?

### 5 things to know

A contact tracer from your state health department might call if you've been exposed to COVID-19. But scammers are pretending to be contact tracers, too. Here's how you can spot the scam.



#### Real contact tracers won't ask you for money.

Only scammers insist on payment by gift card, money transfer, or cryptocurrency.



#### Contact tracing doesn't require your bank account or credit card number.

Never share account information with anybody who contacts you asking for it.



#### Legitimate contact tracers will never ask for your Social Security number.

Never give any part of your Social Security number to anyone who contacts you.



#### Your immigration status doesn't matter for contact tracing, so real tracers won't ask.

If they do, you can bet it's a scam.



#### Do not click on a link in a text or email.

Doing so can download malware onto your device.

Talking to a real contact tracer helps stop the spread of COVID-19. Reporting scammers helps stop them, too. Report fake contact tracers to your state and at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://ftc.gov/complaint).



FEDERAL TRADE  
COMMISSION

For more information about contact tracing visit your state health department's website and

[ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams](https://ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams)

# COVID-19 Vaccines

- ▶ Vaccines will be distributed to federal- and state-approved locations.
- ▶ For most people living in the U.S., states and territories will make the final decisions on who will get the vaccines and when.
- ▶ States are also working on their own specific vaccination plans.
- ▶ Check with your state for specific information regarding distribution plans in your state.
- ▶ More information on where and how to get a COVID-19 vaccine will be available once vaccines are authorized and/or being shipped out.

## Three Ways to Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine Scams

While vaccination details are getting worked out, here's what you can be sure of:

- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine. **That's a scam.**
- You can't pay to get early access to the vaccine. **That's a scam.**
- Nobody legit will call about the vaccine and ask for your Social Security, bank account, or credit card number. **That's a scam.**

Ignore any vaccine offers that say different, or ask for personal or financial information.

Learn more at

[ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams](https://ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams)

[consumerresources.org/beware-coronavirus-scams](https://consumerresources.org/beware-coronavirus-scams)





# Financial Impact Scams

- ▶ Job scams
- ▶ Home-based business opportunities
- ▶ Debt collection
- ▶ For more information, visit [ftc.gov/financialimpact](https://ftc.gov/financialimpact)

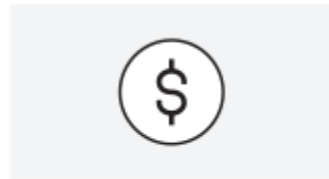


# Fake charities

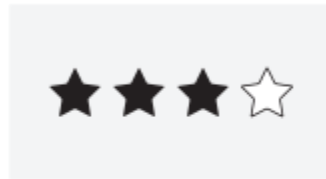
- ▶ Often appear with crises
- ▶ Before you give: do your homework
- ▶ If you give, never pay by cash, gift card or money transfer.
- ▶ Visit [ftc.gov/charity](https://www.ftc.gov/charity)



Research the charity



How much goes to the charity?



Look up the ratings/report

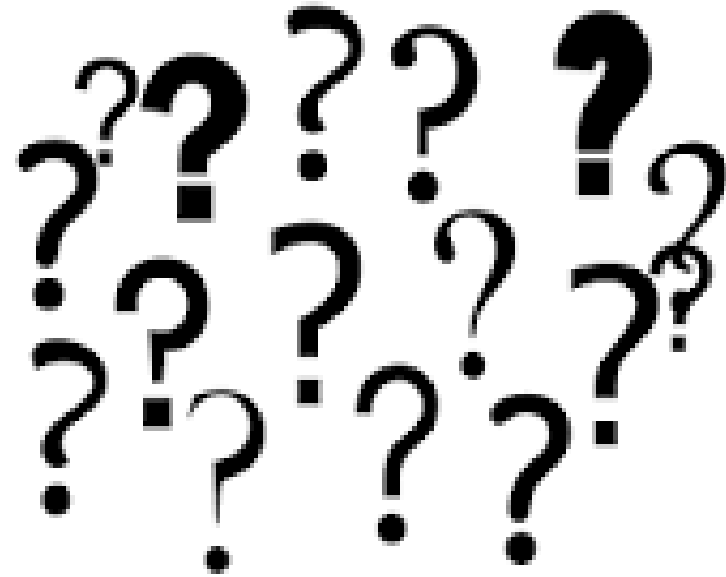


Never pay by gift card or wire transfer

# Misinformation & rumors

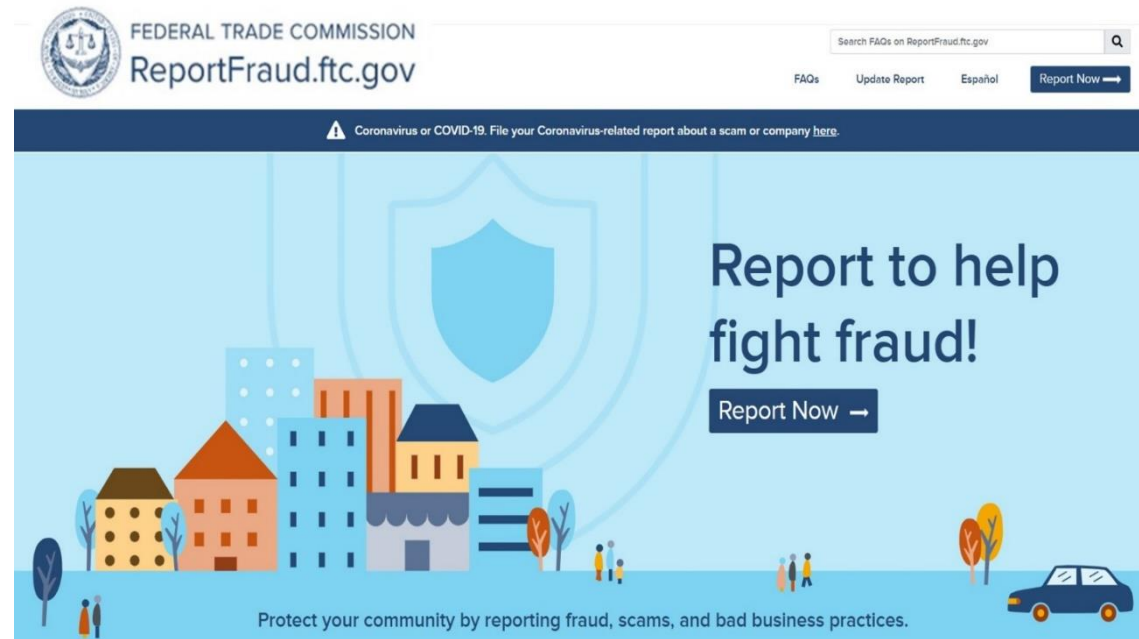
Ask yourself these 3 questions:

- ▶ Who is this message from?
- ▶ What do they want me to do?
- ▶ What is the evidence behind this message?
- ▶ [usa.gov/coronavirus](https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus)



# Reporting Fraud Helps Everyone

- ▶ The FTC just launched **ReportFraud.ftc.gov** — a new version of the FTC’s consumer reporting website



# Stay connected to stay informed

- ▶ For the latest news and information from the FTC:
  - ▶ Subscribe to our consumer alerts at [ftc.gov/consumeralerts](https://ftc.gov/consumeralerts)
  - ▶ Like us on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/federaltradecommission](https://facebook.com/federaltradecommission)
  - ▶ Follow @FTC for the latest tweets from the FTC
  - ▶ Visit [consumer.ftc.gov](https://consumer.ftc.gov) for articles, blog posts, videos, and infographics on a range of consumer topics

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