

'Care Share



SCAM ALERT: CORONAVIRUS INSPIRES SCAM ARTISTS TO TARGET CONSUMERS

Agencies warn consumers to avoid imposter scams and claims of miracle medicines

Tuesday, February 18th, 2020 – The Departments of Consumer Protection (DCP), Public Health (DPH) and the Office of the Attorney General William Tong are warning consumers that scam artists are following the headlines and trying to take advantage of consumers' during heightened attention to coronavirus.

Scam artists may post, email, and text to promote false information about “cases” of the disease in your neighborhood that do not exist, and bogus prevention medication in order to obtain your personal information and your money. They also may ask you to donate to victims through a sham charity or offer “advice” about false treatments for the disease.

To avoid these types of scams:

- **Don't fall victim to click bate.** If you receive an email or text claiming to have news about coronavirus, do not open it, and get accurate information about any updates in Connecticut on DPH's website at www.ct.gov/dph or the [Centers for Disease Control's \(CDC\) website](https://www.cdc.gov) **Watch for imposter emails.** Look out for emails claiming to be the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO). If you're not already subscribed to receive emails from them, you won't get one out of nowhere.
- **Ignore online offers for vaccinations or miracle treatments.** If you see ads touting prevention, treatment, or cure claims for the coronavirus, ignore it. You won't hear about medical breakthroughs for the first time through an ad or sales pitch.
- **Do your homework when considering making donations.** Don't donate to any organization claiming to help those sick from the coronavirus unless you have done your research. Any charity soliciting in the State of Connecticut must be registered with DCP. You can verify their registration at www.elicense.ct.gov.
- **Watch out for scam “investment opportunities”.** The [U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission \(SEC\) has warned people](https://www.sec.gov) about online promotions, including on social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly-traded “companies” can prevent, detect, or cure coronavirus.

“Whenever a topic is of high interest to the news, and to consumers – scam artists take advantage of the opportunity to get your attention,” said Consumer Protection Commissioner Michelle H. Seagull, “That becomes even more true when families are concerned about health risks. We want to encourage families to be more alert than usual, and to report any suspicious activity. Remember, the Department of Public Health is the most reputable place to find information about the coronavirus in the State of Connecticut.”

“Scammers are always looking for new ways to profit off fear, and don’t let them. Check your facts by getting accurate information from a reputable source, like the Department of Public Health, CDC or WHO webpages. If you do receive a suspicious solicitation, including donations to victims or invitations to invest in miracle cures and vaccinations, we want to know about it,” said Attorney General Tong.

Any consumers who notice one of these scams or feel they have fallen victim to a scam should report it to DCP or the Office of the Attorney General as soon as they are able using the below contact information:

Department	Complaint Webpage	Phone
Consumer Protection	https://ct.gov/dcp/complaint	(860) 713-6300
Office of the Attorney	https://www.dir.ct.gov/aq/complain	(860) 808-5318

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Prescription discount cards! Get your free card! Save 50% - 75% at over 60,000 pharmacies! No pre-approval and never expires!

Everyone has probably seen or received an offer for a discount card. There is sometimes an annual fee, but more often than not they are free. But are they?

Though the BBB has determined these types of cards are not a scam, they are misleading. And that’s not to say that some could be a scam, but overall, they are certainly not free. What they are doing when you enroll in one is gathering your information, which you just shared with them, and selling it to data brokers. This is the same when you fill out online surveys or subscribe to a magazine, etc. They make money off of your information. There are articles available to help you understand how your information is sold and what to do about it, like this one:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/06/24/how-stop-companies-selling-your-data/>.

Regarding these drug discount cards, first start by checking with the BBB before doing business to ensure they are legitimate. The BBB says customers should think of them as coupons. If you are considering using one, understand they are not insurance and though they may provide a discount, always check, as oftentimes they cost you more.



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