

## Defend yourself from COVID-19 consumer scams



Scammers are unfortunately exploiting the many emotions and unknowns surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak to con people out of their money. Read up on these emerging coronavirus scams to help protect yourself and your loved ones from falling victim to fraud during this uneasy time.

### Charitable Donations

Scammers often pose as legitimate-sounding charitable organizations to take advantage of kind-hearted people. Con artists are currently soliciting donations for individuals, groups and areas impacted by COVID-19. If you are considering donating to a charity, consider contributing goods and services rather than money. If

you do choose to provide a monetary donation, be sure you are donating to a reputable charitable organization by using a search engine to seek out the charity's website to validate their work.

### Employment Scams

With many people being furloughed or laid off due to the impacts of COVID-19, employment scams are more prevalent than ever. Avoid "opportunities" to work from home with no interview, high wages or no previous experience needed. Cease communication with anyone who requires you to send a fee to begin employment training or to pay for items related to the job.

### Phishing Scams

Scammers are posing as familiar health authorities to send phishing messages designed to trick recipients into providing sensitive and personal information. Other emails that mention downloading a "Coronavirus tracker" could really be a fraudster tricking you into downloading dangerous malware onto your phone or computer. Be wary of fake news and always double check the sender information before opening an email or clicking any links. You can inspect a link by hovering your mouse button over the URL to see where it leads. If you receive an email from a well-known organization that has misspellings or incorrect grammar, it is likely a phishing email.

### Price Gouging

Individuals and online storefronts may sell essential goods such as toilet paper, diapers, or hand sanitizer for extremely inflated prices. Do not purchase items for higher rates in emergency settings. Stores are working hard to restock items, and there is no reason you should give your money to a fraudster.

## **Internet Purchases**

Be on the lookout for items for sale online that do not really exist, such as pet carriers or clothing pieces that tout being made of material that can repel the Coronavirus. From masks to health and cleaning supplies, if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Scammers are also attempting to fill another demand by claiming to sell computers or other electronics, office or school supplies, and other educational items that are essential for those currently working from home or needing to homeschool children. If you plan to acquire these types of items through internet marketplaces, be sure to never use a money transfer service to send money in advance for “holding” or making a purchase you found online.

## **Vaccinations, Cures and Test Kits**

Recognize the signs of a scam if someone contacts you via phone or email offering to sell products that prevent or cure COVID-19 with vaccinations, prescriptions, or test kits. Remember, these types of products are not yet created or available to the general public and consumers should be cautious of companies making these unsubstantiated claims.

If you or someone you know has fallen victim to one of these scams and they sent money using Western Union, [report it](#) immediately.

Find more information on fraud and scams and how to protect yourself at [wu.com/fraudawareness](https://www.wu.com/fraudawareness).

For additional information, please visit the [Western Union COVID-19 Resource Center](#).