

COVID-19 Scams and Fraud

Whenever there is a health crisis, scammers quickly find ways to cheat people out of their money. During the coronavirus pandemic, scammers are using robocalls, social media posts, and emails to take advantage of fear, anxiety, and confusion about COVID-19. Criminals are selling things that don't work, charging money for things that are free, and stealing personal information. Look out for these scams:



COVID-19 testing scams

- **Home test kits sold on the street or door-to-door are a scam.** As of June 2, 2020, home test kits are only available with a doctor's order and they are delivered to patients by mail.
- **Testing for coronavirus is available for free** to anyone in in LA County, *regardless of immigration status*. If you are sick or concerned about COVID-19 talk to your doctor. You can also get a free test by visiting covid19.lacounty.gov/testing or by calling 2-1-1.
- **Learn about COVID-19 testing [here](#).**

Contact tracing scams

- **Scammers may call, visit, write, or email to try to get information.** The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is calling, emailing or writing to people who have COVID-19 and people who they may have been in contact with. Calls from Public Health will show "LA PublicHealth" or 1-833-641-0305 on the caller ID They will never ask about immigration status, request a social security number, or ask for money. If you get a call or a message from Public Health, please respond or call back to help us to control the spread of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County.

Fake COVID-19 treatments and "miracle cures"

- **Advertisements and promotions for supplements and "treatments" may falsely claim to prevent or cure COVID-19.**
- **There is no "vaccine waiting list".** Do not let a scammer take your money to be put on a fake vaccine wait list.
- **Always consult a doctor or other licensed healthcare provider** before taking any medicine or health product.

Get Help

- **Find a doctor:** call 2-1-1 the LA County information line or visit the [211LA website](https://211LA.org).
- **Find resources like food, medicines, and other essential supplies:** call 2-1-1 or visit the [211LA website](https://211LA.org), or the Public Health [resource webpage](#).
- **Report a possible COVID-19 scam and get help trying to get your money back:** contact the LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA): dcba.lacounty.gov or 800-593-8222.
- **Report suspicious claims being made about testing or treatment products:** report to the FTC at ftc.gov/complaint

Stimulus check scams

- **You will NEVER be asked to pay money in advance to receive your Federal stimulus check**, unemployment insurance payment, or social security monthly payment.
- **Learn more [here](#)** about how to avoid being scammed out of your stimulus check.

Price gouging during the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Don't pay more than you should for supplies and services.** Price gouging is when you're asked to pay 10% or more above the usual price for essential goods and services.
- **Price gouging is illegal.** Learn more or file a report at LA County's [price gouging page](#).

Fake "helpers" offering deliveries and errands

Scammers offer to help while you are at home during COVID-19 and then run off with your money.

- Have essential supplies like food and medicines delivered to you by a trusted friend or neighbor, arrange for delivery with a well-known company, or use one of the free services below.
- **Know who you're buying from.** Some [online sellers](#) claim to have in-demand products, like cleaning and medical supplies when they really don't. Order directly from the store or pharmacy and ask about free delivery.
- **Learn about free and low-cost options.** You can get free deliveries through LA County's [Critical Service Delivery Program](#), call 888- 863-7411.
- **Several programs are delivering free meals daily.** Enroll in LA County's [Great Plates Delivered Program](#), or the City's Senior Meals Program [online](#) or by calling (800) 510-2020. For options in your area visit [211LA](#), or call 211.

Fake charities

- Many people want to help others in the community who are suffering and may have lost their jobs due to coronavirus. Unfortunately, people who want to help can be taken advantage of by crafty scammers.
- **Do your homework when it comes to donations.**
- Don't let anyone rush you into making a donation and check if the charity is legitimate by searching the CA Attorney General's [Registry of Charitable](#) Trusts. Get additional tips on donating wisely at [ftc.gov/charity](https://www.ftc.gov/charity)

Medical identity theft and phishing scams

- **Scammers try to steal insurance numbers, personal information, and money.** NEVER provide your Medicare or Medi-Cal insurance number or Social Security number, or other personal information by phone, email or text in response to an unsolicited (uninvited or unknown) contact.
- **Government agencies, like Medicare, Medi-Cal, Social Security, and the IRS** won't call you to sell you anything or offer to "enroll" you over the phone. They will not contact you for your personal information unless you've given them permission in advance. They will not visit you at home either, unless they are working for the [2020](#)

Stay up to date – with reliable information

Beware of fake news and hoaxes as well as scams surrounding COVID-19

Coronavirus Updates

- Visit ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus, sign up for press releases, or follow us @lapublichealth
- Visit the County's COVID-19 webpage covid19.lacounty.gov
- Check the CDC's website www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

Scam Alerts

Stay up to date on the latest scams and precautions you and your family should take.

- Learn about recent scams from the Los Angeles County Consumer and Business Affairs' [consumer alerts](#)
- Visit the Los Angeles County [Office of Immigrant Affairs COVID-19](#) webpage
- Sign up for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) [Fraud Alerts Watch](#)
- Sign up to receive the Federal Trade Commission's [consumer alerts](#)

Learn more about scams and other important health consumer issues by visiting ph.lacounty.gov/hccp

[Census](#). Here are some tips on how to [prevent Medicare fraud](#) and [Social Security scams](#) related to coronavirus. **Hang up on robocalls** from a "government agency" If these [illegal robocalls](#) continue, ask for their

information so that you can report them to the [Federal Trade Commission](#). You can also reduce the number of real sales calls by joining the “[Do Not Call List](#).”

