

# Ask an Expert: Five Tips to Help Avoid Coronavirus Scams

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Scam

Not surprisingly, scammers are taking advantage of the fears that surround the Coronavirus. In fact, the Federal Trade Commission has already communicated with several scammers who are selling phony Coronavirus “treatments.” Scammers have set up websites to sell bogus products using fake emails, texts and social media posts as a method to get victims’ money and personal information.

The scammers’ emails and posts generally promote awareness, prevention tips and fake information about cases in local neighborhoods. They may also ask for donations to victims, offer advice on unproven treatments or even contain malicious email attachments.

Here are five tips to help keep scammers at bay.

1. **Don’t click on links from sources you don’t know**, as it could download a virus to your computer or device. Make sure the anti-malware and anti-virus **software** on your computer is up to date.
2. Watch for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or from “experts” who say they have information about the virus. Fake emails and phishing scams are very common during times like this. Scammers often use familiar company names, colors and logos. For the most up-to-date information

about the Coronavirus, use trusted sources like the CDC and the [World Health Organization](#).

3. Ignore online offers for Coronavirus vaccinations or those that tout prevention, treatment or cure claims for it. If there was a **medical breakthrough**, you would hear about it through a trusted medical source, not through an ad or sales pitch.
4. Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through **charities** or crowdfunding sites. Don’t let anyone rush you into donating. If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card or by wiring money, do not do it.
5. Be alert to “investment opportunities.” The **U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission** warns people about online and social media promotions that claim the products or services of publicly traded companies can prevent, detect or cure Coronavirus. In addition, they claim that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result. Do not fall for these false claims.

For further information on the latest scams reported to the Federal Trade Commission, you can sign up for **consumer alerts** on their website. You can also report suspicious claims to the FTC at [www.ftc.gov/complaint](http://www.ftc.gov/complaint).

Source: [www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov)

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