

TOP 10 SCAMS VICTIMIZING OLDER AMERICANS

- 1. The Grandparents Scam—How to Avoid:** If you receive a suspicious phone call from someone claiming to be a relative or loved one, say you'll call back, and check the story with other relatives. Note that these scammers can get information about you and your relatives off of social media sites like Facebook. Most scammers aren't this sophisticated, but the tactic is not unheard of, so don't be fooled if a suspicious caller references details from your life or a relative's.
- 2. Investment Schemes—How to Avoid:** Remember that if it sounds too good to be true it probably is. Be suspicious of anyone who promises massive returns on an investment and be sure to only deal with reputable and credible institutions.
- 3. Email Scams—How to Avoid:** Be inherently distrustful of unsolicited emails and don't disclose private information online except to a trusted organization. If you have questions about whether a communication you received is legitimate, call that organization directly.
- 4. Sweepstakes and Lottery Scams—How to Avoid:** Be wary, again, of what seems to be too good to be true. Remember that if you have won a sweepstakes, you shouldn't be asked to pay mysterious and suspicious fees within a day or two of the award.
- 5. Medicare Card and Medicaid Card ID Theft Scam—How to Avoid:** Never give personal information like your social security number or banking information over the phone, and be suspicious of calls from people who claim to represent official agencies and then request personal information.
- 6. Charity Scams—How to Avoid:** If you wish to donate to charity following a disaster seek out the charity yourself. Do not make donations to organizations that cold-call you.
- 7. Repair Fraud—How to Avoid:** If you find yourself making poor purchasing decisions, talk to a younger family member about getting help, and possibly a financial power of attorney. If a younger relative has financial power of attorney, sometimes the costs of these fraudulent charges can be reversed.
- 8. Fraudulent Anti-Aging Products—How to Avoid:** Practice a healthy dose of skepticism as a consumer. Be aware that advertising plays to our aspirations and our fears, so don't be manipulated by products that claim to be "anti-aging."
- 9. Cemetery, Funeral and Cremation Scams—How to Avoid:** It's hard to make rational business decisions in grief. If there is a calmer, more stoic family member who has good business sense, it may be best for this person to make the funeral arrangements.
- 10. Counterfeit Prescription Medicines—How to Avoid:** The FDA is dramatically increasing regulation on foreign pharmacies which supply drugs to the U.S., and is now holding them to the same standards as American pharmaceutical plants. But if you order your prescriptions from dubious online sources, you are playing with fire. These drugs will not have received the safety validations of drugs dispensed at certified mainstream pharmacies in the U.S. They could be inactive or possibly even poisonous.