

Beware of Coronavirus Scams

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Many scammers are taking advantage of concerned and frightened citizens during the coronavirus pandemic. It is important that everyone remain extra diligent to ensure that they do not fall victim to any of these scams. Here are some tips that will help you protect your money and your identity:

- Beware of emails claiming to offer information from Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or other health and medical sources. For the most up-to-date statewide and local information visit the Florida Department of Health at www.floridahealth.gov, for national information visit the CDC at www.cdc.gov, and for international information visit the World Health Organization at www.who.int.
- Do not respond to emails, phone calls, or text messages about stimulus checks from the government. These are only attempts to gain your personal information.
- Many scammers are selling fake vaccinations, medications, remedies, cures, and test kits for coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Don't fall for these offers! At this time there are no FDA authorized home test kits for coronavirus. For more information visit www.fda.gov.
- Buy from reputable online sellers. Many online scammers are offering hard to find cleaning and sanitizing products or health and safety equipment such as masks and gloves. These items may be fake or you may pay and never receive your items at all. Make sure you know who you are buying from.

- Do your homework regarding charitable donations. Many scammers take advantage of people's generosity during times of crisis. If you want to help, donate to legitimate and established organizations and never make donations by sending cash, purchasing gift cards, or by wiring money.

If you believe you may have been the victim of a coronavirus scam, please call the Punta Gorda Police Department at 941-639-4111 or your local law enforcement agency.