

BOOMERS & BEYOND

Scammers' Tricks Are No Treat

They never give up. Scammers are still taking every opportunity to steal our identity and separate us from our money, and the list keeps growing. Here are a few of the scams out there now:

Seniors are getting calls from people who claim to be employees of the Department of Justice. Reports to the National Elder Fraud Hotline say that these scammers pretend to be investigators, and what they want is your personal information. If you get a

call like this, don't be concerned that it's an authentic government call. It isn't. Just hang up.

Maybe you'll get a call wanting to sell you an air purifier. They'll claim it will clean any coronavirus out of the air in your home. Maybe they'll try to get you to put it on a credit card, or they'll claim it's Medicare approved and all you need to do is give them your Medicare number. Don't fall for either of these tricks.

Scammers will try these same tactics with miracle

cures for COVID, masks that are "guaranteed" to protect you, face shields, vitamin supplements, free COVID tests, low-cost prescription drugs and much more.

Sometimes scammers pretending to be from the government will try to get your personal information by saying they want to send you a stimulus check, or maybe they claim to need Census 2020 information. Sometimes it's about an expired warranty on your car or lower interest rates.

Just hang up. Don't press 1 or any other number to have your number taken off their list. All that does is give them another opportunity to convince you to give up personal information.

If someone you don't know leaves a message about any of these topics, ignore it.

Remember that we seniors are the preferred target of these scammers. Don't fall for their tricks.

Now More Than Ever, Get Your Flu Shot

A sincere wish just came true: This year's high-dose senior version of the flu shot will contain all four vaccines. In past years, the senior shot (for those over age 65) contained only three of the vaccines, two A and one B. Most years I would write a snarly note to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ask about the reason for the false economy. Of course I never got a reply, but now ... finally, we seniors will have a flu shot

with all four vaccines.

And what a shot it will be. The four vaccines are names we haven't heard in a while, if ever: A/Guangdong-Maonan (H1N1), A/Hong Kong (H3N2), B/Washington and B/Phuket. To help us kick start our immune system, the senior version will contain four times the amount that younger folks get. The standard trivalent (three-way) will have two A and one B, while the standard quadrivalent (four-way) has all

four.

If your doctor says you should have a flu shot, don't delay. When I called my pharmacy (where I get my flu shots each year), the first appointment was many days out, and they had been swamped with requests for the shot. Yes, they will be resupplied when they run out, but no, they didn't know how quickly that would be.

By getting a flu shot, should you get sick later this season, it will be a good

bet that it's not the regular flu, which will save much time in getting a diagnosis.

To find flu shots, call your doctor, local pharmacies, grocery stores or go to vaccinefinder.org. If you have a Medicare or insurance card, you won't have to pay anything.

If you want to know more, check the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2020-2021.htm.

Who's Hoarding the Mini Blinds?

It's a bit unnerving to walk through a store and see so many empty shelves. I haven't been to the local big box store very often lately, but I wanted to see if what I suspected was true.

I'd been unable to order a number of items for curbside delivery and had been told that lots of things were actually in the store but couldn't be purchased except inside in person. That made no sense. I suspected that, instead, those items just weren't there.

So, in I went, mask on face, miniature hand sanitizer bottle in purse.

I was stunned to see so many empty shelves. It wasn't like the first month of the pandemic when people were hoarding and taking as much bread, sanitizers and canned goods as they could carry out, until limits were put on purchases. Instead, there were shelves empty of items you wouldn't normally associate with hoarding, like mini blinds.

Who hoards mini blinds?

I could (maybe) understand the lack of packs of lined school paper and pencils, for the kids doing remote learning, or toys because the kids are home all the time. I could see where we'd still be missing a variety of paper towels. And I could almost understand the few choices for shampoo and bath soap.

But what about dishes and light bulbs? Unless one was in the market for square red dinner dishes or

40-watt bulbs, there were none to be had.

Certain shortages we can understand. But what has happened to the supply line when we can't get a simple 100-watt bulb?

With winter coming, we might do well to reconsider our supplies and add a few light bulbs to our stash. Otherwise we might be in the dark even more than we already are.

Quarantine Scofflaws Put Us All at Risk

A recent local party was so loud it could be heard nearly a quarter mile away. A curious neighbor got in his car and went to investigate. He reported back that

it was a very large gathering of young people in an alley, music echoing off the brick walls, not a mask to be seen, nor any social distancing. The neighbor did a quick calculation and estimated that the crowd had many times more than the restrictions allow. A call to the police netted this sad truth: They really don't care.

The alley party the other night does not bode well for the coming fall. It's highly likely they were college students, celebrating a return to school. The next days

they were in the grocery stores stocking up. (Thankfully there is at least one store in town that insists on the wearing of masks and spacing in lines. The other one's stated policy is that they are not the police.)

We see on the news that tens of thousands of young people are frolicking together on the beach ... and we know the outcomes of those interactions. The virus is going to flourish in those environments, and it will spread even more than it already has, forcing us to

stay locked down even longer.

While it's not smart to personally approach those who are violating the rules, we can make calls. Let the store managers know you won't be shopping in their stores unless they enforce mask and distance rules. Get your neighbors and friends to call as well. Let the town council know the police are not responsive, as well as retail and dining establishments that allow flouting of the rules.

Those are a few things we can safely do.



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