

Moving Forward

Westhampton Council on Aging

Programs and Services for Active Living at 60+



May 2020

COA Activities and Programs Remain Suspended

All Westhampton COA events and activities, including for May and June, remain cancelled until further notice. The library is also still closed until further notice. During this time, we are all following social distancing guidelines for public health and safety. Seniors in particular are strongly advised to stay home. We are clearly in unprecedented times. But it helps to remember that however physically distant we are, we are not alone. We are all in this together and working to help our neighbors in any way we can.

Support for Westhampton Seniors during COVID-19

Vital Services Contact Info:

Do you have a need for services during this time? For instance, do you need groceries but because you are a senior, the health risks imposed by grocery shopping make it impossible for you to do that yourself? **If so, you may contact CHRIS WAYNE from the Westhampton Congregational Church Outreach Committee at (413) 529-0257** and he will do his best to assist you. He and the Church volunteers may not be able to address all your needs but they will try to help wherever they can.

Neighborly Check-In Phone Call:

We know these times are difficult for seniors of all ages and that you may be feeling extremely isolated right now. Therefore the COA Board members have decided to take action by contacting residents age 75 and up by phone just to say "Hi" and to check in. PLEASE NOTE: COA board members will always identify themselves by name and as COA board members and will **NOT** ask you for any personal data. If anyone calls you and DOES

ask you for this information, this is a scammer, so hang up immediately.

Also, COA Board members are available to call seniors of ANY age. Would you like a friendly check-in phone call (either a one-time call or ongoing calls) from a member of the Council on Aging? **If so, please call AMY LANDAU, COA Coordinator at (413) 203-3086 and leave a message** to provide your contact information. Even if you don't feel you want check-in calls right now, please make a note of this phone number just in case you do so at a later time.



Mental Health Support:

If you are feeling especially anxious or depressed and/or experiencing a crisis, call this 24 Hour Crisis Line at Clinical and Support Options Inc.: **(413) 236-5656**

Hand-Made Masks

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is now recommending that all Americans wear cloth coverings while in public. In response, Meaghan Schwelm, the Director of the Westhampton Library, is organizing a local effort to make cloth masks for residents in Westhampton who are in need of them. If you are a senior who needs to leave home for an important task, such as a doctor's appointment, pharmacy visit or grocery shopping, please contact Chris Wayne at (413) 529-0257 and we will do our best to get you a mask (allow at least one week).

Please note: masks must be managed properly (do not touch the outside of mask; wash with soap and hot water after each public outing). Also, the wearing of a mask still requires social distancing of at least 6' and washing hands for 20

Westhampton COA ✦ 3 South Road ✦ Westhampton, MA 01027 ✦ Seniors Helping Seniors
Coordinator: Amy Landau 413-203-9808 ✦ westhamptoncoa@comcast.net

seconds. The advisory to stay home as much as possible remains. You should only request a mask if you will be in a public space.

Sign up for Code Red (Reverse 911) Alerts

We are urging all seniors to sign up to receive important alerts with Code Red by visiting the Town website here: www.westhampton-ma.com/. Click on the red band at the top that says "COVID-19 Information and Resources." Scroll down toward the bottom to find the CODE RED sign up link.

Westhampton Emergency Services during COVID-19

EMS & Fire Department are committed to the safety of all residents. They have put in place certain changes in protocol. For more information, please see: www.westhampton-ma.com/home/urgent-alerts/covid-19-information-resources and click: "What to Expect from Westhampton Emergency Services."

Guidelines for Sickness:

- If you are not feeling well and think you may have COVID-19 or are experiencing fever, coughing, sore throat, shortness of breath stay at home and contact your primary physician immediately.
- **IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911.**

Ideas for Staying Sane & Fit While At Home

Sit Less, Move More

- ⇒ When watching television, get up during every commercial and do an active chore. For example, empty the dishwasher, throw some clothes in the laundry, or take out the trash.
- ⇒ If you can't walk or stand, try seated knee lifts, kicks, foot slides, punches, or arm circles.
- ⇒ Put on some music and walk briskly around the house or up and down the stairs for 10 to 15 minutes, 2 to 3 times per day.
- ⇒ Dance to your favorite music. (Try it on the front porch so the neighborhood children can join you from their yard!)
- ⇒ Do an exercise video. (Remember Jane Fonda and Richard Simmons?)
- ⇒ Don't have one? Search on the Internet for "Yoga with Adriene—Chair Yoga" on Youtube.com!



Outdoor Activities

- ⇒ Begin some not-too-strenuous yard clean-up. Plant a small flower or vegetable garden.
- ⇒ Do some bird-watching from your window (or in your yard).
- ⇒ Walk or jog to the mailbox, around the block, or down the street. Wave to your neighbors as you go by. Just remember to keep a 6' distance with others and avoid crowded spaces.

Find the Silver Lining

Take this "time-out" opportunity to reconnect with friends and relatives by phone or e-mail, enjoy some fresh air and stroll around your home outside (when safe social distancing is possible), challenge yourself with a jig-saw puzzle, read a good book, watch an old movie classic, or prepare some comfort food. You can always put it in small containers and freeze it to savor in a few weeks. This is also a great time to get artistic!



Write about a memory, do a craft activity, knit a sweater, draw or paint a picture, sing a song.

Pull out the binoculars and do some bird watching in your yard or out your window. You can also declutter by cleaning out a drawer, a shelf, a cabinet, or a closet. If you're really ambitious, tackle the attic or garage, working on one small section a day. Finish that project that you started a couple of years ago. Wave to your neighbors from your porch or front window. And be sure to take breaks from listening to or reading the news!

2020 Census

Don't forget to get counted by the 2020 Census! You can do this by phone, online or by mail. You DO NOT need a Census ID to complete the census. There is always an option to submit your info without a Census ID. The deadline for the census is August 14, 2020. As AARP states, "An accurate census can help communities become more livable for people of all ages."

- Phone: 844-330-2020. (Spanish speakers, call: 844-468-2020.)
- Online: my2020census.gov/.
- Mail: Complete and mail back the paper questionnaire sent to your home. If you have not completed the census by phone or online, you should receive the questionnaire through the mail by August.



Online COA Programming

Interested in accessing online programming for activities to do at home? Email the COA Coordinator at WesthamptonCOA@comcast.net to get on our email list, and we will let you know when/if this programming becomes available

Newsletter Notice

I'd love to hear from seniors on how they've been occupying their time while staying home during the past 6 weeks or so. I'd like to share some of your ideas with other seniors in our June newsletter, in case we still need to occupy ourselves at home during June.

Please email me at wendypb71@comcast.net or call me at 527-1465. (I'll share what I've been doing, too.) Thanks, Wendy Blow

Sleigh Ride

On Feb. 19th, a very cold and blustery winter day, about 15 seniors carpooled up to Chesterfield to the Clay Hill Farm where they had wonderful old-fashioned sleigh rides. The wooden sleigh was pulled by 2 very large but very friendly draft horses. They seemed to have as much fun as we did! We were provided with blankets (if needed) and treated to hot cocoa by a fire where we could make s'mores between rides. It was a very memorable experience. Afterward, we stopped at Westhampton Woods to have a light supper of tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches provided and served by the Friends Board.



WCOAH--Flash Hike

The first hike of 2020 was on a beautiful, warm day in late February. Despite announcing it only a day or 2 ahead, 11 hikers were able to enjoy the nice weather by hiking at Arcadia. Ray has more possible hikes planned but will have to wait until our COA programs open up again.



March Luncheon

Our annual luncheon with the 4th graders and their grandparents took place on March 5th. We were joined by 33 guests who came for lunch with our COA seniors. Some kid-friendly foods were served along with our usual potluck, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. The macaroni and cheese was a big hit with the kids! One of the best parts (aside from their entertainment) is that the children are always very helpful and helped to serve dessert (which they had a lot of fun doing) and cleared the tables afterwards. Then the real fun began when the kids presented a talent show for us. It is just amazing the ideas they come up with, and the talents that they have these days! A few days later, our coordinator received a whole bunch of beautiful heartfelt thank-you letters for the seniors from the 4th graders.

Feb. and March birthdays: (front) Marion M., Mary L., Sally L. and Lida F. (back) Louise J., Wendy B. and Mary Ellen P.





TRIAD COUNCIL

Seniors, Police, and Support Services Together — Learning ~ Informing ~ Empowering
Contact: Ginny Curtis – 529-9873

Deadline Nears: 2020 MA End of Life Options Act

The 2020 MA End of Life Options Act (H.1926/ S. 1208) would allow qualified terminally ill adults to request and self-administer medication to end their life in a humane and dignified manner if they choose.

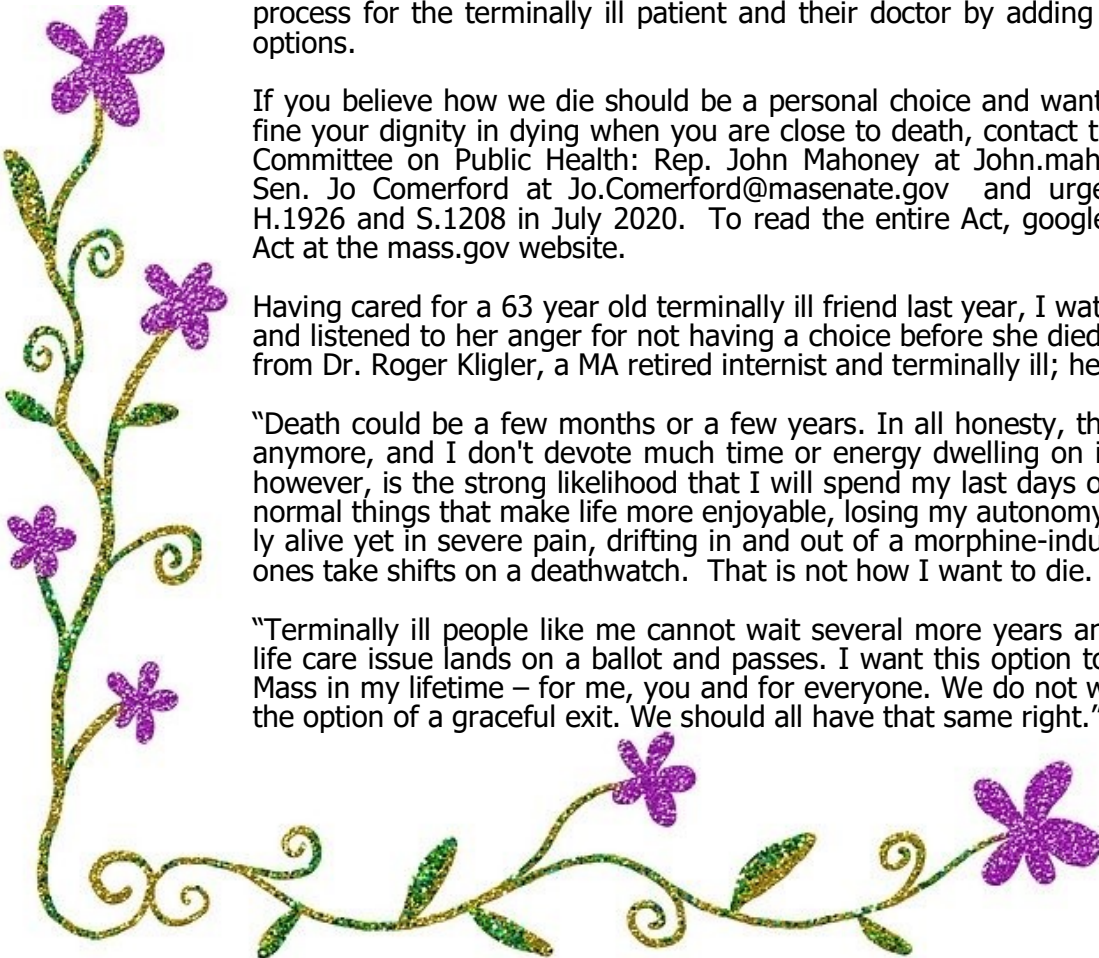
The deadline for lawmakers to consider this End of Life Options Act has been extended to July 31, 2020. This legislation is sponsored by 20 MA Senators and 47 House Representatives. Those supporting this Act contend that MA laws should ease the decision making process for the terminally ill patient and their doctor by adding to their legal end of life options.

If you believe how we die should be a personal choice and want to have the right to define your dignity in dying when you are close to death, contact the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Public Health: Rep. John Mahoney at John.mahoney@mahouse.gov and Sen. Jo Comerford at Jo.Comerford@masenate.gov and urge them to vote to pass H.1926 and S.1208 in July 2020. To read the entire Act, google MA End of Life Options Act at the mass.gov website.

Having cared for a 63 year old terminally ill friend last year, I watched her lose her dignity and listened to her anger for not having a choice before she died. I share this 2017 quote from Dr. Roger Kligler, a MA retired internist and terminally ill; he speaks for her:

"Death could be a few months or a few years. In all honesty, that part doesn't scare me anymore, and I don't devote much time or energy dwelling on it. What does scare me, however, is the strong likelihood that I will spend my last days on Earth unable to do the normal things that make life more enjoyable, losing my autonomy and dignity, being barely alive yet in severe pain, drifting in and out of a morphine-induced haze while my loved ones take shifts on a deathwatch. That is not how I want to die. Would you?"

"Terminally ill people like me cannot wait several more years and hope that this end-of-life care issue lands on a ballot and passes. I want this option to be clearly authorized in Mass in my lifetime – for me, you and for everyone. We do not want to die. We just want the option of a graceful exit. We should all have that same right."



The Westhampton Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to continue our important programming for local seniors!

I would like to contribute to the Westhampton COA. My contribution of \$_____ is attached.

(Please write your check to The Friends of the Westhampton Council on Aging, write "program support fund" in the memo line, and mail to Charlotte Wood, 14 Perry Hill Rd. Westhampton, MA 01027.)

Name _____

Address _____

Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



As the coronavirus spreads into our hilltowns, you have been given a lot of good advice on social distancing and what to do if you come down with it or are exposed to it.

Our topic this month is what to do if you or a loved one needs an ambulance.

It is easy; dial 911. Listen to the dispatcher and answer his/her questions. You may be very anxious, but don't be impatient. The dispatcher needs to ask the questions so that the appropriate response team will get to you.

Breath, keep your distance and be SAFE!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator
Williamsburg & Cummington Fire Departments

The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.

**Summer is still coming. Save this date!
Thursday August 20, 2020**

Let's go back to when Life was Simple:
Pickety Place Luncheon
Mason, New Hampshire

5-Course Luncheon,
Acres of gardens, greenhouse,
unique Herbs and Gift Shop



Chesterfield Adults 60
and older: \$25 p/p
All other residents and others: \$40

Motor Coach will depart from
Chesterfield Comm. Center 8:45am, return 5pm
Goshen Town Hall 9am, return 4:45pm

To register and to get more information,
call Maryanne Coleman: 296-4787

Full Payment due at time of registration

**Would you like to receive your newsletter
by email instead of snail mail?**

If so, please email Kristen at
regionalcoanews@gmail.com to be put on
the email list. Include your address so I will know
which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

Spring Cleaning

No, not windows, though mine are a little dirty... let's talk about those annoying piles of paper. Can you imagine having just a few tidy, labeled, and filed stacks of paperwork? Can you imagine no risk of sliding on a loose piece of paper and falling? Can you imagine someone being able to come into your home and find the medical records you need right now because you went to the hospital? No? Well, we have some time, so let's see what can be done.

First, find a container such as file drawers or cardboard boxes of a size to hold folders. Find folders or dividers. Get a marking pen and/or labels. Find a box for shred and recycle.

Second, find a clear surface and lay out your piles and stacks, sorted into their relevant topics. Determine by topic if they are: keep forever, keep several years, keep a year or less, or shred and recycle. Those things to be kept can be sorted by date, and you may find that some older documents really don't have to be kept. What are the topics? Insurance, bank, automobile, mortgage, utilities, medical, purchases... you get the picture.

Make sure you have topics that relate to taxes. As you might expect, the IRS rules for what to keep and how long to keep it are lengthy and won't even fit this column. Here are the basics:

www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/how-long-should-i-keep-records

Other things such as automobile titles or house deeds, and on the other end, expired warranties for products you don't even still have are simpler to determine. I found several good lists of topics and their timetable for keeping. If you can't access these yourself, give a holler after you've started your process and can see what you have to deal with.

Cleanly,
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member
413-268-2228, jeanoneilmass@gmail.com

Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth



Seems like there is a scarcity of "good news" these days as we learn to deal with this Covid-19 pandemic, developing new habits of social distancing, scrupulous hand washing, and disinfecting surfaces. Hopefully it's not too early to say we might be seeing some "flattening of the curve" because of our new habits?

Meanwhile neighbors check on neighbors, families and friends keep in touch with social media, new groups of volunteers spring up and our leaders are thinking of ways to work collectively. Who could have imagined Governor Baker putting together a deal with China for over a million face masks and having the New England Patriots jet go pick them up and deliver to Massachusetts hospitals, and our National Guard escorting some of these masks to New York hospitals? It sounds like a movie script, but difficult times call for creative solutions.

More good news:

We have until July to file both our State and Federal income taxes. The Food Stamp program has not been reduced as expected and pop-up Food Pantries are happening in our communities.

Along the same lines, Governor Baker has "frozen" MassHealth benefits. This means those MassHealth consumers who have to file their re-application paperwork won't lose benefits. Those individuals in the process of filing new applications for MassHealth benefits have more time to get their applications completed. Your time won't run out if you miss a deadline. This decision keeps MassHealth benefits in place and suspends deadlines for getting paperwork completed.

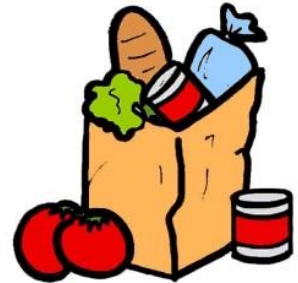
Here's hoping next month will see more progress defeating this pandemic. Until then, stay well, and help a friend or neighbor when you can.

The Hilltown Food Pantry, with its permanent location in Goshen, is open every Wednesday from 1-3pm [extended hours to 6pm are temporarily suspended] and will serve the remaining towns of its service area: Chesterfield, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, and Williamsburg. Food distribution for this site has moved across the parking lot to the Goshen Town Hall assembly room. Again for space considerations to help clients, volunteers and staff maintain a safe distance from one another as bags are packed and distributed.

Both sites offer drive by pick up of prepacked bags of groceries for people who are struggling to have food on hand during this national pandemic emergency. The supplies include shelf stable items, fresh produce and other food items as available.

Hilltowners may also choose to access emergency food from Northampton Survival Center at the Jackson Street Elementary School, 120 Jackson St, Northampton on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12-3pm during the national Covid-19 crisis.

For more information go to the website: www.northamptonssurvival.org or call 413-268-7578.



Hilltown Food Pantry Reopens

Hilltown Food Pantry, a program of Northampton Survival Center, is open for food distribution to residents of the hilltowns of western Hampshire County.

In order to better adhere to the physical distancing guidelines our state is prescribing, and to help people stay closer to their homes, a temporary sister pantry has been opened at the R.H. Conwell Elementary School on Route 112 in Worthington to serve residents of Worthington and Cummington who are in need of grocery supplies. Please call 413-238-1999 to reserve bags for pick up on Thursdays from 1 – 1:30pm at the school.

The **Hilltown Mobile Market** is coming back this summer with more farms, new locations, a longer season, and double the number of farm shares!

Your support during our pilot season last year resulted in increased grant funding to purchase a market vehicle and broaden our reach to more communities. Starting in July, we will bring "pop-up" markets to Blandford, Cummington, Huntington, and Worthington each week for twelve weeks, stocked with the freshest Hilltown-grown produce. Stop by and shop with cash, credit, debit, SNAP, WIC, or Senior FMNP Coupons, or sign-up in advance for a **Hilltown Mobile Market Farm Share** to support our farms and guarantee your pick of that week's harvest. The

Farm Share is an affordable option with a sliding scale between \$5-20 per week and is also eligible for HIP (Healthy Incentives Program) reimbursements!

The market is supported by *Healthy Hampshire*, *Hilltown Community Development* and the *Hilltown Community Health Center*.

For more information or to sign up for a farm share, visit **hilltownmobilemarket.info** or contact Caitlin Marquis: 413-588-5562, cmarquis@collaborative.org.

Joan Griswold stays in touch and keeps us moving

During our time of keeping our distance while staying close, Joan has made it so much easier for those in her exercise classes to get through it all. Her daily email messages bring encouraging thoughts, important insights and images of her strategies for "working it out" outside. Her emails are refreshing in more ways than one. Here is one of them:

When times get tough, we have to do our best to keep moving!

It seems like it all changed, in just a mere few days. Life as we knew it came to a screeching halt while fear and anxiety began to escalate. Our day to day routines became disrupted, and it took some time for some to realize just how serious things had become. The reality has now sunk in; it's a different world out there right now.

In those final days, I recall the experience of being told I could not teach my exercise classes I so adore, I could not teach valuable CPR skills to folks looking to be helpful in a time of need. If someone had told me a month ago that life as we knew it would be changing like never before, I am not so sure I could have believed them yet here it is, right outside our doors.

Here we are in the midst of the corona storm. We all know someone who knows someone impacted by this storm. We are told to stay great distances apart, and while being outdoors is a great idea, you have to avoid all the mobs. As I continue to navigate my way through each day, I know in my heart the most important thing I can do is to "continue to support". A giver by nature, this comes easily to me. What is harder is relaying it via a media means.

There are some important points that I try to relay. **The most important is to be sure you move your body, each and every day, in some way.** Maintaining some physical movement is good, for both the mind and body. I created a YouTube channel for all to resource. There are exercise, nutrition and relaxation videos available for all. Check out my channel at:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCtInbx8RBhb_GC4fvN3icJw/featured

Subscribe to be informed when I update and add more! I have now begun to also provide Zoom exercise sessions for the Monday, Wednesday and Friday groups. Contact me for additional information.

Routine in your day is an absolute must. Have a plan or a list of what needs to be done! Try to have things that you can incorporate into your day, and make you feel good! Maybe it is reading, calling a friend to talk or writing a poem, tending to your plants, or simply sitting quietly and appreciating being alone. If alone is something you are feeling too strongly, there is an email list that allows participants to write and share with others. If this sounds like something you need in your day, just let me know and on the email distribution list your name will go!

Eating wholesome and healthy foods supports healthy brain function. This is also an important consideration for keeping your immunity at its optimal function. Hand washing and good hygiene along with distance from others is important, but how about being mindful of what you decide to fuel your body with each and every time you reach for something? Carbs are so easy to consume in a pinch, but do not forget to have something with protein content each and every time you eat.

I personally believe the best way to start the best day is to get up and get your exercise out of the way. Morning is a wonderful to wake up your heart and challenge your muscles, or to be outside enjoying fresh air and the beauty that surrounds us here in the hills. I have never been more appreciative of the little trails, low traffic roadways and local little streams. They provide such beautiful and tranquil scenes. Be in these wonderful moments as much as you can; stop and cherish them as the gift that they are. Breathe deeply and expand those lungs, feel your belly extend then engage core to spine. Do not forget your muscles need attention too! Pick up those free weights and crank out a simple strength exercise or two!

Stay plenty hydrated, for this, too, is important as it keeps your joints lubricated and your body functions regulated. It's great for your skin while it flushes your body of all the crazy toxins!

Maintain a positive attitude the best that you can. It is really easy to be down when you watch the news and engage with others who cannot see the positive things that surround them every day. I am so incredibly thankful for the elders who I am fortunate to know; they have taught me that sometimes you have to admit things are out of your control. Once you acknowledge that this is the case, you can move about your day with greater dignity and grace.

We will gather in person again sometime soon! Until then, be sure to make the effort to take care of YOU. The corona storm will indeed pass. Until then, please stay healthy and safe.

Westhampton Council on Aging
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TIPS TO AVOID CORONAVIRUS SCAMS



If you have a consumer problem or question, contact the Northwestern District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit:

Greenfield (413) 774-3186
Northampton (413) 586-9225



- **Hang up on robocalls.** Don't press any numbers. Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from scam Coronavirus treatments to work-at-home schemes. The recording might say that pressing a number will let you speak to a live operator or remove you from their call list, but it might lead to more robocalls.

- **Ignore online offers for vaccinations and home test kits.** Scammers are trying to get you to buy products that aren't proven to treat or prevent the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) — online or in stores. At this time, there also are no FDA-authorized home test kits for the Coronavirus.

- **Fact-check information.** Scammers, and sometimes well-meaning people, share information that hasn't been verified. Before you pass on any messages, contact trusted sources.

- **Know who you're buying from.** Online sellers may claim to have in-demand products, like cleaning, household, and health and medical supplies when, in fact, they don't.

- **Don't respond to texts and emails about checks from the government.** Anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is a scammer.

- **Don't click on links from sources you don't know.** They could download viruses onto your computer or device.

- **Watch for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) or experts saying they have information about the virus.** Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

- **Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding sites.** If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it.