



COUNTY OF YOLO
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Beware of Medical Scams During COVID-19

(Woodland, CA) - (May 5, 2020) – While many people have rallied to help others in response to COVID-19, there are others trying to make money off of the fear and uncertainty surrounding it. The Federal Trade Commission and Federal Drug Administration have issued warning letters to several companies which have stated that they are able to treat or prevent COVID-19. These companies are marketing products such as aromatherapy, teas, colloid silver, essential oils, and vaccines and medicines allegedly under FDA testing.

There are no known products to treat, vaccinate, or prevent COVID-19. No at-home tests for COVID-19 exist. Do not give any money or insurance information to anyone claiming otherwise. Other states have also had reports of fake drive through “testing” where fake test kits were sold for over \$200 each. In addition to losing your money for something that will not work, it is extremely dangerous to use any untested medical products.

In general, you should not purchase medical products through ads, calls, texts, or emails. Only make purchases on the advice of your doctor, and then only through trusted retailers like a local pharmacy. Do not participate in any drive through COVID-19 testing unless it is backed by a legitimate company or advised by your doctor.

The best way to avoid contracting or spreading COVID-19 is to follow the guidelines set by public health officials. Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds. If soap isn’t readily available, cover your hands with hand sanitizer and rub them until they feel dry. Clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces. Stay home as much as possible, and avoid contact with other people. Wear a cloth face covering or mask whenever you go out in public.

You can also take basic steps to avoid being scammed. The most effective prevention is to not make contact with scammers in the first place. Do not pick up or respond to calls, emails, or text messages from unknown numbers. It can be more tempting than ever to pick up the phone while home alone. Instead, if you want to reach out while sheltering in place, there are other ways to do so safely. To access local resources while sheltering in place, contact 211. If you are feeling stressed about the pandemic, you can call the Federal Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-

5990. For general emotional support, call the California Peer-Run Warm-line at [1-855-845-7415](tel:1-855-845-7415). Seniors can call the Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance at 530-757-5583 to be matched up with someone to chat with daily.

If someone contacts you about a COVID-19 related product, do not give them any money or personal information. If the caller says not to tell anyone, or that you will miss your opportunity if you don't act quickly, that is a "red flag" that you are being scammed and you should hang up immediately. If you have been contacted through E-Mail or social media, immediately stop replying, print out all conversations and contact your local authorities. You may call the Yolo County District Attorney's Office Fraud Hotline at 855-4-YOLO-DA to get a second opinion, or to report a scam call. While there are people looking to take advantage of others in this uncertain time, taking precautions and being aware of recent scams can protect you and others from being the next victim.

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