Scammers have been using COVID-19 as an opportunity to defraud victims based on current events. Common scams include:

*Government entity (IRS or Social Security) asking where to send your stimulus check or to “keep your social security benefits coming”. These entities will not call you. As of April 1, 2020, Social Security recipients do not have to file a simple return to get the economic impact payment. Center for Disease Control (CDC) or World Health Organizations (WHO) will also not generally contact you. Small businesses have received bogus calls claiming to be from these agencies.

*Person in Need— “send money for me for my friend to help them get groceries/medical care/etc. they need”. These calls can be spoofed from your friend’s number even, so make sure you know who you are talking to. Call them back on the number you had for them previously.

*Charity scams---now is a great time to fund local community needs if you want to donate.

*Testing/Vaccine/Medications related to COVID-19. All of this should be in discussion with your healthcare provider, not online, from a phone call or a stranger at your door. Do not give out your Medicare number to anyone who is not your healthcare provider.

*Online shopping/Internet Use-- Scammers can make a website look almost identical to the actual site so be cautious. In checking your email, go to the actual site directly, rather than clicking on a link in your inbox, and don’t be afraid to call someone directly if you receive an email from someone you know asking or telling you to do something they would not typically do —like send money in some form (could be gift cards, money order, etc). Make sure the internet connection you are using is protected from hackers.

There are a lot of unusual transactions and exceptions taking place with the response to COVID-19. Everything from changes in financial aid for college students, student loans, retirement account accessibility, unemployment, small business loans, the list goes on. Websites with .gov are the most reputable for this information. Be suspicious and do your homework!

For any questions, please contact Renae, Family and Consumer Science Agent specializing in Family Resource Management @ 785-263-2001 or renaer@ksu.edu