



# Scams Against Seniors:

## **TELEPHONE FRAUD**

A guide for protecting yourself and  
your loved ones

# DID YOU KNOW that one in 10 Americans age 65 or older who lives at home will become a victim of abuse?

While the frightening number above includes all kinds of abuse, such as physical abuse, financial exploitation is one of the most common forms of abuse. In fact, according to the Senate Special Committee on Aging, **seniors lose an estimated \$2.9 billion annually from financial fraud.**

## ARE SENIORS EASY TARGETS?

Seniors who are retired and live in their own homes are more likely to be available to be contacted by hucksters. In addition, elderly people are more likely to:

- Be willing to listen
- Be trusting and polite
- Be vulnerable due to loneliness, grief or loss
- Have financial resources due to a lifetime of hard work

These factors make seniors more likely to be preyed upon. Unfortunately, according to data from the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, **elderly individuals are the most frequent targets of scams.**

## COMMON PHONE SCAMS

**1. Credit Card Services** A “robocaller” asks you to “press 1” to speak to a representative about lowering your credit card interest rate. These scammers want information. If you press anything on your phone, they know they have reached a working number and will keep calling you.

**2. Computer Repairs** Callers, claiming to be from a well-known company, say they’ve detected a virus on your computer. They offer to fix the problem by connecting remotely to your system. But instead of fixing your computer, the scam artists are actually trying to install a virus to give them access to your files and personal information.

**3. IRS Scam** A caller claims to be from the IRS saying you owe taxes that you must pay immediately or risk arrest. They want you to pay with a credit card or by providing the number for a prepaid debit card.

**4. Medicare** Fraudsters pose as Medicare representatives to get seniors to give them personal information, such as their Medicare identification number. The scammer uses this information to bill Medicare for fraudulent services and then pockets the money.

**5. Sweepstakes and Lotteries** Callers inform victims that they have won a prize but must pay a fee or taxes to obtain the prize.

*Kansas Attorney General and the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners*

“One in 10 Americans age 65 or older who lives at home will become a victim of abuse.”

~Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt



## HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF OR YOUR LOVED ONES?

### 1. Avoid answering calls from numbers you don't recognize.

If it's a legitimate caller, he or she will leave you a message.

### 2. Never give personal or financial information over the phone.

This includes bank or credit card numbers, social security numbers, Medicare ID numbers, etc.

### 3. Never pay to receive something you "won."

### 4. Be suspicious of anyone who wants you to send funds

via wire transfer or prepaid reloadable card.

### 5. Consider it a red flag if the caller insists on secrecy.

## COMING SOON

Watch for additional guides from Envista Credit Union and Aldersgate Village, where we'll cover other common rip-offs, such as:

- Email and Internet scams
- Door-to-door "sales"
- Mail fraud
- Investment scams and fraudulent financial advisers
- Identity theft

We'll also provide more tips for protecting yourself and your loved ones from fraud as well as what to do if you or your loved ones have been victimized.



*Our thanks to Ray Lundin for his help with this document. Ray is the loss prevention officer for Envista Credit Union. He began his career in law enforcement in 1983 with the Riley County Police Department in Manhattan, Kan. In 1988, he joined the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, where he worked a variety of felony crimes, including narcotics, white-collar crime, violent crime and homicide. Ray is a 2005 graduate of the FBI National Academy, and in 2008, he became an FBI Police Executive Fellow. Ray retired from law enforcement and has been serving as Envista's loss prevention officer since 2017.*

Learn more about fraud prevention and how Envista protects its clients at [envistacu.com](http://envistacu.com).

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*Envista Credit Union has been providing quality financial services to the residents of Kansas since 1957.*

***Learn more at [envistacu.com](http://envistacu.com).***

*Aldersgate Village is a faith-based senior living community in Topeka, Kan., that provides services for every senior need.*

***Learn more at [aldersgatevillage.org](http://aldersgatevillage.org).***