

Spot and Avoid Health Scams

Your health and the health of your loved ones is a priority. Scammers know that and tap into your emotions to peddle frauds that are useless or even harmful.

Tips to avoiding health scams:

- **Do some research.** Search online for the name of the treatment or product along with the key words "review," "complaint," or "scam."
- **Ask a health professional first.**
 - Does this product or treatment actually work?
 - What's the scientific evidence?
 - How will it interact with other supplements or drugs the person you're caring for takes?
- **Be skeptical about products that come with guarantees or promises.** Medical professionals avoid absolutes and never guarantee recovery or protection against disease.
- **Know that "natural" doesn't mean either safe or effective.** Poisons and carcinogens can occur naturally or be extracted from nature. "Natural" is not always healthy and possibly dangerous. Some "natural" products might even interfere with proven treatments recommended by a doctor.
- **Evaluate the claims.** Be skeptical about claims featured in advertisements. Don't assume a government agency or a credible health care professional has approved a claim, even when the ad runs in a credible news magazine or on your favorite podcast. Ask your doctor or visit a credible website offered by a credible health care organization, like your local hospital, the Mayo Clinic or a government entity like the U.S. Health and Human Services Department.
- **Be skeptical about warnings about secret remedies the government or the pharmaceutical industry is withholding.** Ask yourself if it makes sense for an entire very competitive industry to want to hide valid health information from the public. Although there have been individual bad actors among pharmaceuticals, their competitors have no incentive to protect them. Ask yourself who benefits if you ignore credible medical professionals and scientists? Ask yourself why the federal health care agencies would combine to suppress remedies when they regularly promote quality health information on a range of health issues. Time and time again, the advertisers who use these claims turn out to be liars and fraudsters.