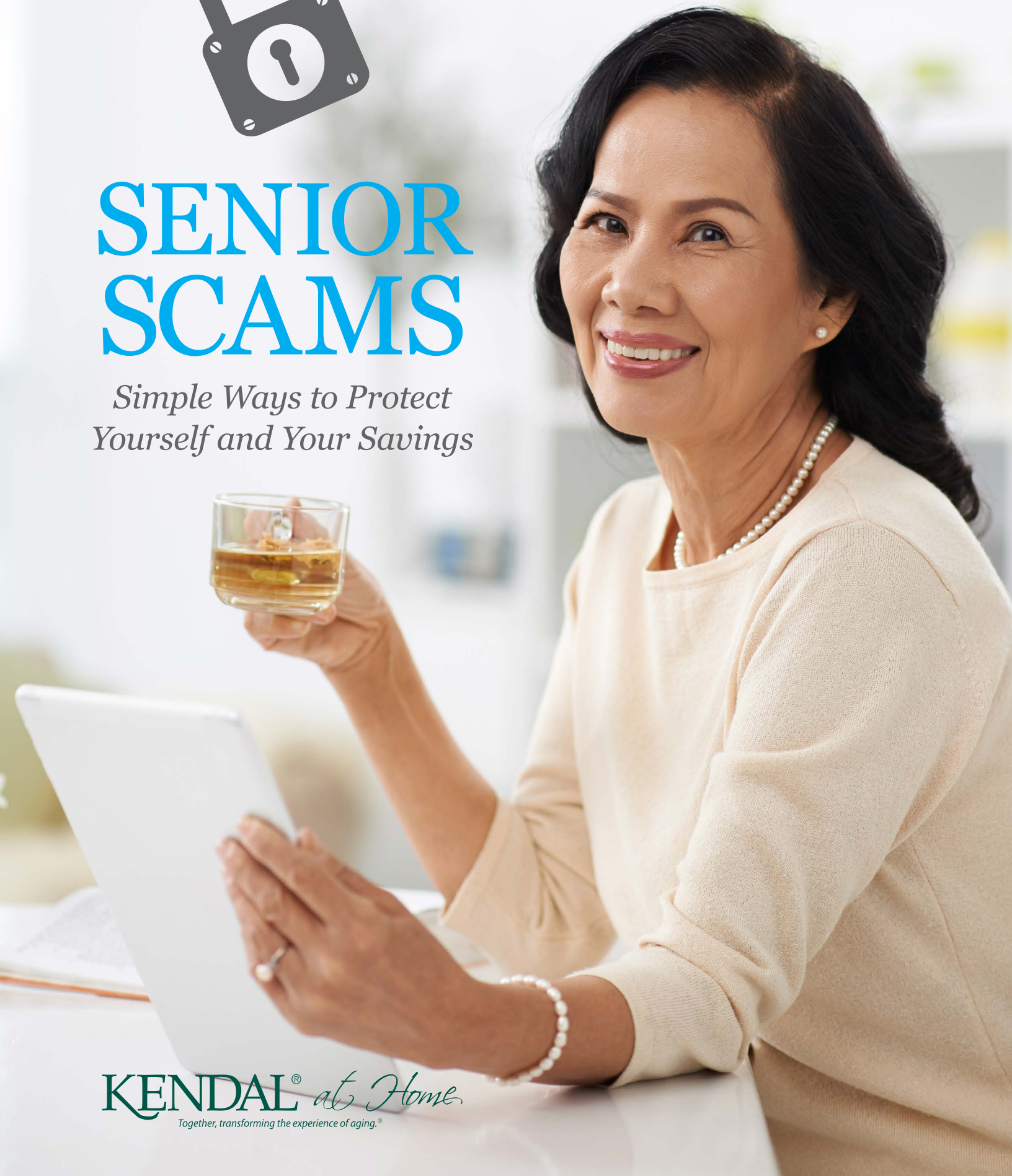


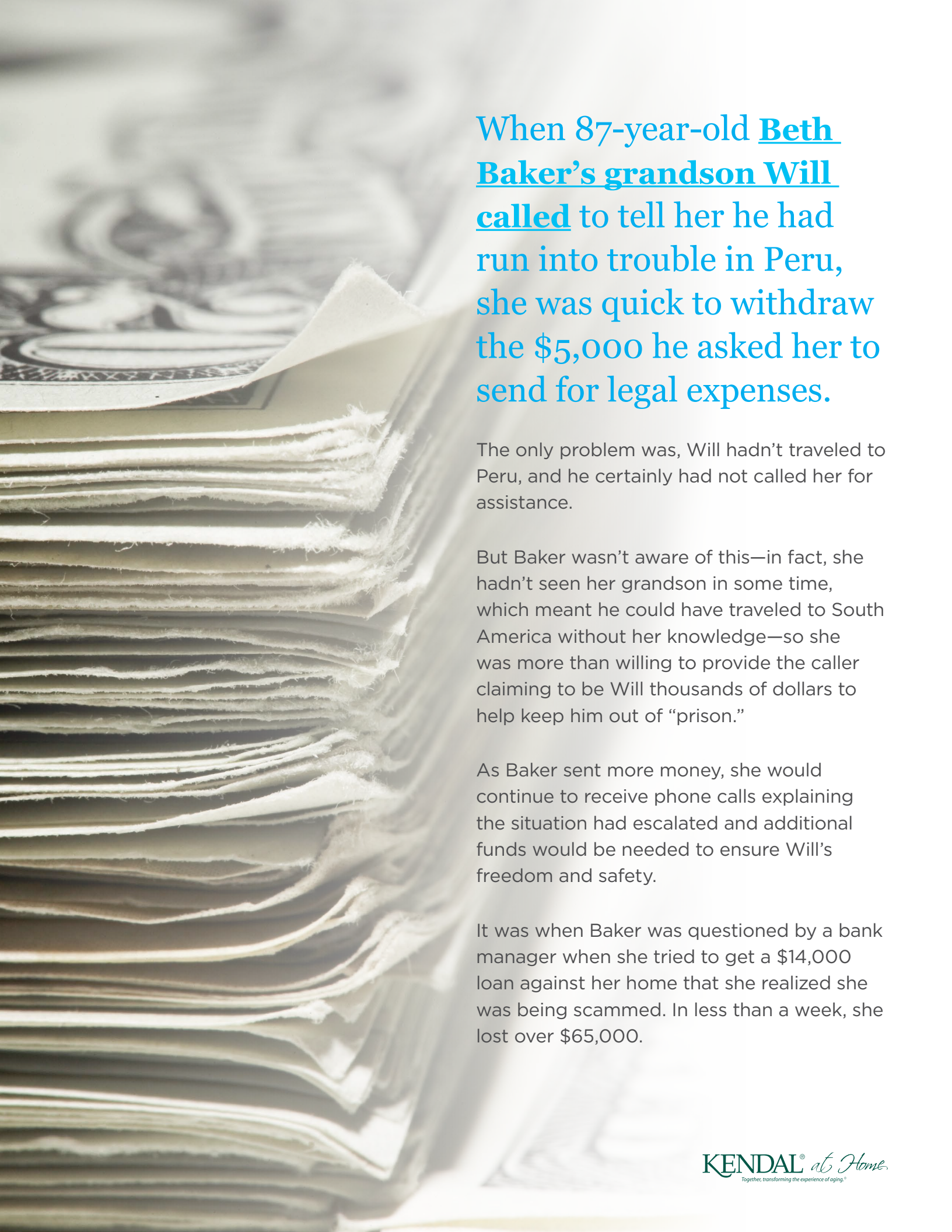


SENIOR SCAMS

*Simple Ways to Protect
Yourself and Your Savings*



KENDAL[®] *at Home*
Together, transforming the experience of aging.[®]



When 87-year-old Beth Baker's grandson Will called to tell her he had run into trouble in Peru, she was quick to withdraw the \$5,000 he asked her to send for legal expenses.

The only problem was, Will hadn't traveled to Peru, and he certainly had not called her for assistance.

But Baker wasn't aware of this—in fact, she hadn't seen her grandson in some time, which meant he could have traveled to South America without her knowledge—so she was more than willing to provide the caller claiming to be Will thousands of dollars to help keep him out of “prison.”

As Baker sent more money, she would continue to receive phone calls explaining the situation had escalated and additional funds would be needed to ensure Will's freedom and safety.

It was when Baker was questioned by a bank manager when she tried to get a \$14,000 loan against her home that she realized she was being scammed. In less than a week, she lost over \$65,000.

The Rise of Elder Fraud

You might think Beth Baker's story could never happen to you, but it can. Consider this: In 2015, seniors lost [**\\$36.5 billion to elder exploitation**](#). The rise in exploitation is a result of the increasing population of older Americans—expected to triple by 2040—and the fact that they:

- Have been raised to be polite
- Often have money in a savings account
- Don't want to burden their friends or family with questions or problems stemming from fraudulent offers, so they're less likely to report fraud
- Don't have the family nearby to discuss "too-good-to-be-true" offers

*In 2015 alone, seniors lost **\$36.5 billion** to elder exploitation.*



Kinds of Fraud to Watch For

Though you should always be wary of anything that sounds too good to be true, there are some [scams specifically targeted to older adults](#), according to Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine.



Home Improvement Scam

Contractors offer to repair your roof, pave your driveway or do other work for a good price, but in the end do little or no work.



HOW TO SPOT ONE

A contractor may ask for a portion of the payment upfront before beginning any work. Or he or she may ask for a down payment to purchase supplies needed for a job.



HOW TO PREVENT IT

If you're interested in doing business with a contractor who contacts you, ask for a service contract in writing before paying any money. The contract should include what work will be done, the estimated costs, the estimated timeframe and what to do if the work is not completed to your liking. You should also use the [Better Business Bureau](#) to research the company.



Identity Theft

Can happen when someone obtains your personal information to commit fraud.



HOW TO SPOT ONE

A caller may claim to be from your bank or health insurance company and need your Social Security number. Or they may threaten you with arrest or legal action if you don't provide information like your Social Security number or bank account information. A scammer may also obtain your personal information from discarded bank statements or medical bills.



HOW TO PREVENT IT

Banks, businesses and government agencies do not request sensitive information over the phone, through email or on a website. If you receive a request from your bank or another agency asking for sensitive information, call and verify the request before providing anything. Always shred any documents that contain personal information.

Types of Fraud



Living Trust Scam

Someone may attempt to sell you legal services by making exaggerated claims about the tax benefits of a living trust or probate costs.



HOW TO SPOT ONE

A caller, door-to-door salesperson or someone online may use high-pressure sales tactics to persuade you to purchase a “one-size-fits-all” living trust option.



HOW TO PREVENT IT

Be aware of high pressure sales techniques when evaluating a living trust. If you feel pressured to make a purchase quickly either via mail or in-person, be skeptical and never sign or agree to something you do not fully understand. Remember that your financial and estate planning needs are unique to your situation and require appropriate time and attention.



Phishing

Scammers may attempt to obtain your personal information by using clever phone calls or emails.



HOW TO SPOT ONE

Many scammers who phish do so by posing as an employee of your bank or government agency asking you to update or confirm your information. Then you're asked to provide the caller (or emailer) with your full account information. A phishing scam may also ask for your account numbers, password or Social Security number.



HOW TO PREVENT IT

Preventing a phishing attack involves the same tactics you'd use for preventing identity theft. Remember, banks, companies or other agencies won't ask you to provide or verify personal information on the phone, through email or via a website.

Types of Fraud



Sweepstakes/Prize Scam

Congratulations! You've won a prize or some money. All you have to do to claim it is mail a small amount of money to an official-looking address. Once you pay, however, your prize never arrives.



HOW TO SPOT ONE

You receive notice you've won a prize, but you have to pay a fee to collect it



HOW TO PREVENT IT

While there's no way to prevent a scammer from contacting you offering a fake prize, keep in mind that if prize collection involves a fee or you didn't enter a sweepstakes for a prize, the offer is likely fraudulent.



Reverse Mortgage Scam

You are offered a free home, foreclosure or refinancing assistance or investment opportunities through an investment seminar, mailer, TV or radio ad or billboard.



HOW TO SPOT ONE

A reverse mortgage lender encourages you to buy another product or service with the money you'd receive from your reverse mortgage. Or a reverse mortgage lender claims to be from a government agency or a government agent—while the government insures and administers legitimate reverse mortgages, it does not employ mortgage lenders or offer reverse mortgages directly.



HOW TO PREVENT IT

Don't respond to unsolicited ads about reverse mortgages and be skeptical of anyone who claims you can own a home with no down payment. If you're interested in a reverse mortgage, select a lender from the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's approved list of lenders](#).

Types of Fraud



Health Insurance or Healthcare Fraud

Healthcare fraud can involve a “free” product offer from a medical equipment manufacturer in exchange for your Medicare number, unnecessary or fake tests given to you at a health club or shopping mall and billed to your insurance or counterfeit prescription drugs.



HOW TO SPOT ONE

The dates and services on your claim don't match the time period of services you received during your appointment. Look for:

- **Billing for the same thing twice**
- **Charges for services you did not receive**
- **Services or procedures that your doctor did not order**

Medical equipment fraud will involve the claim of a free item in exchange for your personal healthcare information.

For counterfeit prescriptions, you may notice a pill tastes or looks different than your normal prescription.



HOW TO PREVENT IT

Don't give your personal health information—Social Security number or health insurance ID numbers—to strangers. Keep a healthcare journal or calendar where you note the date, doctor and services you receive during appointments. Then compare the information in your log with the information on your claims. Don't sign blank insurance forms or give blanket authorization to a provider to bill insurance for services provided, and ask questions of your doctor or health insurer if you do not understand your bill or claim.

Carefully examine your prescription drugs and be aware of changes you notice in pill shape, size, color or taste from one prescription to the next, and talk to your pharmacist or doctor if you notice anything suspicious.

If you order medication online, make sure the site has the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Site (VIPPS) seal of approval.

Warning Signs of a Scam

- A stranger asks you to wire him or her money or asks for a prepaid money card
- You have won a contest you did not enter
- You feel pressured to act, or are prompted to “act now!”
- You need to pay a fee to receive a prize you have won
- Someone requests your personal or highly sensitive information
- A company refuses to provide written information, a contract, requests a large down payment or has no physical address
- Any opportunity where someone insists you pay in cash for services or goods
- You are guaranteed to make money without risk
- You are threatened with legal action or arrest if you do not take immediate action

How to Protect Yourself Against Fraud

In addition to watching for scam warning signs, you can help protect yourself from potential fraud by:



Properly storing or shredding sensitive documents

It is tempting to keep your mail on your desk or kitchen table, but if documents contain sensitive information, they can be used against you by someone who enters your home—either invited or uninvited. Store sensitive mail in a locked filing cabinet, and when you're finished with it, shred it.



Always read the fine print

Whether you're approached at the mall to enter a sweepstakes or a tempting offer is mailed to you, always look for and read the fine print. In addition, always read the terms and conditions of anything you're going to sign.



Register with the national Do Not Call List

Consider registering your phone number—landline, mobile device, or both—on the [national Do Not Call Registry](#). If you're asked to give out your phone number—at a point of purchase—for example, reconsider doing so.



Check with the Better Business Bureau

Before agreeing to purchase from an unknown company or donate to a charity, investigate. You can contact the Better Business Bureau to get reports on businesses who have contacted you, and you can [research a charity](#) via your state's attorney general's office.



Opt out of sharing personal information

Many businesses collect personal information, like email addresses, home addresses or phone numbers for marketing purposes. If you'd rather not share your information, opt out of the company's policy. The opt-out option can usually be found in an unsubscribe link at the bottom of an email, on the company's website or by calling the company.



Don't trust caller ID

Advances in technology have made it easier for scammers to "spoof" caller ID systems, allowing them to appear as a legitimate business or law enforcement agency. If you receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from a business or agency asking you for personal information or threatening you with legal action or arrest, hang up and verify the call with entity the caller claimed to be from.



Monitor your bank account

Check your bank account and any credit card statement regularly and look for any unusual or unauthorized charges.



Check your credit report

At least once a year, you should check your credit reports to ensure information is accurate. You can do so at annualcreditreport.com



Remember, if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you become the victim of a scam, you should report it to your local law enforcement agency, your state's attorney general's or the U.S. Senate's Special Committee on Aging.

This information is presented by [Kendal at Home](#), a unique program that enables you to age in place with the security you and your family desire. We have been able to help our members remain healthy and independent by providing a continuum of care as well as taking advantage of the latest technology advances that promote aging in place. Since opening in 2004, 99 percent of Kendal at Home's members have remained in their homes.

To learn more about how Kendal at Home members are successfully aging in place, **Register for one of our Free Seminars online at www.kendalathome.org/get-started or by phone at (877) 284-6639.**

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