

RAO Newsletter #2020-3 Beware of COVID-19 Testing Scams Targeting TRICARE Beneficiaries

4/2/2020

While medical professionals in the U.S. and overseas are working hard to combat the coronavirus, some people are using this as an opportunity to take advantage of others. If you receive a call from someone offering to send you a COVID-19 testing kit, you could be the target of a scam. Below are facts about testing and ways you can prevent your TRICARE information from being stolen.

Know the testing process

COVID-19 testing isn't available for everyone. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [your medical provider](#) is the only one who can determine if you need testing. So be sure to talk to him or her if you're experiencing symptoms. The [main symptoms of COVID-19](#) include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Other risk factors include:

- If you've come into contact with someone known to have COVID-19.
- If you recently traveled to a [CDC-confirmed infected region](#).

"Scammers know COVID-19 testing kits are in high demand," says Dr. John Kugler, chief of the Clinical Support Division at the Defense Health Agency (DHA). "They're targeting beneficiaries who may be unaware of the testing process and looking to steal their personal information. Your health care provider will usually determine and order the test if you need it, so check with your doctor's office if someone else offers you testing."

What to do if someone calls

The people involved in the COVID-19 testing kit scam are looking to steal personal information from you. This could be your Social Security, credit card, or bank account numbers. Don't give them the opportunity to do it. If you receive a call about coronavirus testing, [submit a fraud report online](#) to the DHA Program Integrity Office. Also report it to your [TRICARE regional contractor](#).

Look out for other scams

Testing kit calls aren't the only way scammers are taking advantage of the COVID-19 outbreak. They're on social media, too. The Securities and Exchange Commission recently put out a statement on avoiding [coronavirus-related investment scams](#). When using social

networks, like Twitter or Facebook, be wary of people you don't know who ask for money. If you use a mobile payment app, like Cash App or Venmo, don't give out your username or contact information to a person you don't know. If someone you know sends you a social media message about a COVID-19 fundraiser, call them before sending any money. It's better to be safe than sorry.

A helpful reminder

If you're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, have been in close contact with someone sick from COVID-19, or traveled to an area where COVID-19 is widespread, don't make an appointment or walk into your local military hospital or clinic. Instead, you should remain at home and contact your medical provider. Your medical provider will assess your condition and determine if you need to be tested.

Call 911 and get medical attention immediately if you develop emergency warning signs:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

For more information about TRICARE and COVID-19, you can visit the [TRICARE coronavirus page](#). For the latest news on COVID-19, be sure to visit www.cdc.gov and www.fema.gov.

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