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Preventing Identity Theft

10 Tips to Help Protect You from Identity Theft

1. Don't give your personal information to anyone who calls you or comes to your home uninvited.
2. Only give personal information when needed to doctors, other health care providers, and plans approved by Medicare, and to people in the community who work with Medicare, like your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) or Social Security.
3. Protect your Medicare number like you would your credit card number. Never let anyone else use your Medicare card.
4. Shred any documents containing personal information before you throw them away.
5. Don't give out your Medicare information over the phone or Internet. (However, there may be some legitimate cases where you may be asked to give this information. For example, if you have requested assistance from Medicare, or if you choose to join a Medicare Advantage or Prescription Drug Plan over the phone.)
6. Always review your Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) for accuracy.
7. Review your Medicare drug plan's Explanation of Benefits to make sure only prescriptions you filled are on the statement.
8. Consider writing "See ID" on the signature line of your Medicare or credit card. Your health care provider or merchant will ask you for a picture ID to make sure you are the cardholder.
9. Review your credit report for unpaid medical bills for services or equipment you didn't get.
10. Check your credit report. You can get a free credit report each year by calling 1-877-322-8228 or by visiting [Annual Credit Report](#).

If you think someone is using your Social Security number or Medicare information:

Call the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) ID Theft Hotline at 1-877-438-4338 (TTY 1-866-653-4261) to file a complaint if someone is using your Social Security number. You can also file a complaint online at [FTC](#).

Call the Fraud Hotline of the HHS Office of Inspector General at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477) (TTY 1-800-377-4950) to report that your information was used to bill Medicare/Medicaid for services or supplies you didn't get. You can also e-mail HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov.

If you filed a complaint with the FTC and you think someone is still using your Social Security number, Social Security may assign you a new number. Contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 for more information.

The FTC provides a toolkit, forms, sample letters, and publications to help resolve and untangle the financial issues surrounding identity theft. Call the FTC at 1-877-438-4338 for more information.

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