BE WELL | THE YEAR OF YOU

Stay safe from identity theft this winter

The holiday season is a time for family and celebration, but along with holiday shopping, it can also be prime time for identity theft. Here are some tips from the Federal Trade Commission to stay safe from identity theft and other fraud this holiday season:

- Don't answer phone calls, texts, social media messages, or emails from numbers or people you do not know. Don't click links in these messages.
- Be aware of phishing attacks and don't share personal information like your bank account number, social security number, or date of birth with anyone until you have verified their legitimacy.
- Make sure to shop on reputable websites and look for a padlock symbol in the URL bar.
- Regularly check your bank and credit card accounts for unusual activity.
- Educate yourself on skimming – a type of payment fraud that occurs at ATMs, gas station pumps and physical payment terminals. Learn more about skimming and effective precautions you can take to prevent it from happening to you here.

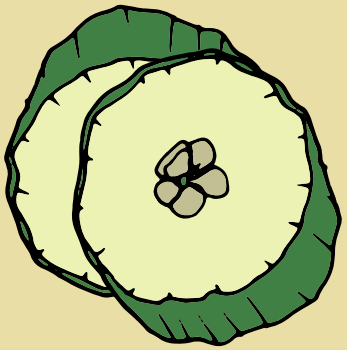
The holidays can be a stressful time, and you don't want to add to that by having your identity stolen. With a few simple steps, you can help protect yourself from scams and enjoy a worry-free winter season.

Act quickly if you suspect that you have been a victim of identity theft. Be sure to visit www.identitytheft.gov to help you get a recovery plan in place.

SHOP LOCAL

While it may be more convenient to shop online or at big-box chain stores, consider shopping locally this season. Most small business owners are passionate, hard-working people doing something they love. When you shop local, the money you spend goes directly back into your community and can help support people who need it more than the big chains. Check out your wish lists for this upcoming holiday season and consider what items you can find at local businesses.

Learn more: thewoodword.org/top-stories/2024/11/24/opinion-heres-why-you-should-shop-locally-this-holiday-season



Learn more: https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-know-about-identity-theft#protect

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