

March is Fraud Awareness month in Canada, and no one is immune to fraud. Fraudsters target specific segments of the population, including small businesses, seniors and students. Protect yourself and your family from fraud with these simple tips from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Center. Visit them online at <http://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/news-nouvelles/fpm-mpf-eng.htm> as they highlight a different scam every day in March.

How much do you really know about fraud?

How to Protect Yourself

- First and foremost, be wary. Don't be afraid to hang up the phone, ignore an email or close your internet connection – and please, never be fooled by the offer of a valuable prize in return for a low-cost purchase.
- Do your homework! Don't give out valuable information or make a purchase without really inspecting the vendor. How trusted is the company, and are you making your purchase through appropriate channels?
- Bank statements, credit card bills, cheques, old tax returns and any other statements that have important personal information should be shredded when you're done with them.
- Check your credit report annually and report any issues right away! Better safe than sorry!
- Until you know a business is 100% legitimate, never disclose your financial information, credit card numbers, driver's license number or any bank information. If you're worried that you've been contacted by a scam artist, contact PhoneBusters, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Call Center at 1-888-495-8501

Know When You're a Target

- Health fraud is currently a major concern for Canadians. Scams include weight-loss schemes, cure-all promises, or products claiming amazing side-effects.
- Most "miracle cures" are really scams that will rob you of time, money and most importantly, your health. Always remain cautious and discuss any treatments with a qualified health professional before you move ahead.
- Around 35% of Canadians say they've been victims of mass marketing fraud.
- 82% believe mass marketing fraud is currently on the rise. It's commonly thought that education and understanding is the best form of combat.