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10 TIPS TO PREVENT IDENTITY THEFT

Identity theft can happen to anyone, and it can be stressful and time consuming to resolve. Here are 10 ways to help you avoid becoming the next target.[1]

Guard your information. Never give out your personal information, including credit card or Social Security numbers, in response to a call or email you did not initiate.

Click with caution. Be wary of online pop-up ads, links or attachments that seem suspicious. Watch out for messages that may be disguised to look like they're from a friend or an organization you know.

Shop online safely. Make sure you're on a secure website before entering your credit card information. Look for "https" in the address bar and a padlock symbol in your browser window.

Monitor financial statements. Always read your financial statements and check your accounts for suspicious activity.

Shred it. Shred credit offers, account statements and expired credit cards to keep your personal information out of the wrong hands.

Create strong passwords. Use unusual combinations of letters, numbers and symbols. Avoid words or phrases that can be easily hacked (like your birthdate or pet's name).

Secure your devices. Lock your phone and other devices with password/passcode protection. Or, use the latest options for fingerprint or facial recognition if available.

Use antivirus software. Install virus-detection software on your computer and mobile devices. Protect your data by using the most up-to-date operating system available.

Avoid public Wi-Fi. Never shop online or access sensitive data while on public networks.

Check your credit report. Review your credit report once a year to watch for errors or fraudulent activity.

Source:

1. Federal Trade Commission. "Identity Theft." https://www.usa.gov/identity-theft (last reviewed/updated February 14, 2019).