

Medicare imposters want to steal your money. Don't let them.

Pop quiz: If someone calls you asking for your bank account number, should you give it to them?

Answer: **NEVER.** Hang up – it's a **SCAM.**

We've heard about different kinds of imposter scams on the rise. In one scenario, scammers call, pretending to work for Medicare. They say they need to verify your bank account number --- and it might sound convincing. Some callers may even know the first few numbers of your account, and say you just need to verify the rest. But if you fill in the blanks, you're giving them access to your money and their goal is to steal it.

The callers may say they lost your information and need it to deposit funds, provide additional benefits, or send you a new Medicare or prescription card. They assure you there's no charge and act like it's an urgent matter that your benefits will be cut off if you don't give them your bank account information right away.

In truth, it's all a trick to steal your money. Medicare will never call you and ask for your bank account information.

So the next time you get a call like this, here's what to do:

- Don't give out your bank account number or any part of your Social Security number
- Simply hang up the phone
- Report your experience a 1-877-FTC-HELP or ftc.gov/complaint. Click on "Scams and Rip-offs, and then "Imposter Scams."
- If you have questions about your Medicare benefits, call 1-800-MEDICARE

Chances are you know someone who could use a reminder on how to avoid these imposter scams. Pass on this information and share with your friends and family.

****Information reprinted from Federal Trade Commission Consumer Information dated 01/12/2016**

Laughter is the Best Medicine – When was the last time you had a really Good Laugh???

Here are some ways to bring more humor and laughter into your life:

Smile: Smiling is the beginning of laughter. Like laughter, it's contagious.

Count your blessings: Literally make a list. The simple act of considering the good things in your life will distance you from negative thoughts that are a barrier to humor and laughter!

When you hear laughter, move toward it: People are very happy to share something funny because it gives them an opportunity to laugh again and feel the humor in it.

Spend time with fun, playful people: These are people who laugh easily, both at themselves and who routinely find humor in everyday events.

Bring humor into conversations: Ask people: What's the funniest thing that happened to you today?

Laugh at yourself: Share your embarrassing moments.

Attempt to laugh at situations rather than bemoan them: Look for the humor in a bad situation, the irony and absurdity of life.

Surround yourself with reminders to lighten up: Put up a funny poster in your office, choose a computer screensaver that makes you laugh. Frame photos of you and your family having fun.

Keep things in perspective: Many things are beyond our control, so make the best of a situation.

Deal with stress: Stress is a major impediment to humor and laughter.

Pay attention to children and emulate them: They are the experts on playing, taking life lightly and laughing!!!

**** Information reprinted from February 2016 issue of Iowa County News & Views/Aging and Disability Resource Center Newsletter *****