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The Monthly Brief

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PHONY OPIOID TREATMENTS

Scammers are capitalizing on the opioid epidemic by marketing phony treatments. The FTC and FDA issued a warning to companies that deceptively advertise these treatments ([View a list of companies](#)). How this Scam Works:

You see an ad for a product that claims to ease opioid withdrawal symptoms. Many of these phony products claim to be a "miracle cure" with "guaranteed" results. Many brands stress that their pills are "all natural," "organic" and contain vitamins and herbs. For examples, check the [FDA's Flickr account of photos of illegal products](#).

Trying one of these "cures" may seem harmless, but it's more than just a waste of time and money. Using products with unsubstantiated claims can prevent those addicted to opioids from seeking safe and effective treatments.

Tips to avoid this scam:

- Beware of products making claims like "miracle cure" or "results guaranteed." Many such treatments are not FDA-approved
- Check with a doctor before taking any dietary supplement. Find a list of questions [onFDA.gov](#).
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](#)) offers referral and information services by calling them at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or visiting [SAMHSA.gov](#) online for confidential and free information. They can help you or someone you love get the real treatment needed to fight addiction. * BBB.org

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Fake Customer Service Numbers

Looking for help with Amazon Prime? Like most of us you probably turn to Google to find the correct number to call. Easy right?

Yes, but what you may not know is that [scammers are posting fake customer service numbers](#) on blogs, websites and across the internet to steal the information of unsuspecting consumers.



Calling one of these numbers puts you in contact with a crook who pretends to be with Amazon and attempts to obtain your credit card, banking or other payment info to process a refund or gift card. But it's not just Amazon Prime, [Apple, HP and other large companies are also being targeted](#).

We Googled "Amazon Prime Customer Service Number" and were surprised that only the first response was actually from Amazon, but didn't show a phone number. The next 12 results displayed a fake number. Some used "Amazon" within the domain name, others were linked to community areas of legitimate websites like Facebook and Wikia. Criminals had manipulated Google so that the fraudulent numbers overwhelmed the presence of the real Amazon customer support numbers.

To avoid this scam, don't use a search engine to find a customer support number. Visit the actual website of the company you want to contact and get the info directly from them.

*Clarke.com, DailyScam.com, ValleyNewsLive.com

DANGEROUS TECH SUPPORT SCAMS

Recently one of our readers was the target of a [Tech Support Scam](#). He received a call from a "unavailable" number and a person claiming to be with a security software company. He was offered a \$199 refund due to problems with his software, but needed a credit card number to issue it to. When told no, the scammer offered a code to access the refund from a website. However that was a trick to install remote access software to the victim's computer. The scammer then demanded \$400 in gift cards to return control of the computer back to the victim.

These scams try to gain consumer's trust in hopes of accessing their computer and personal and financial information. Whether claiming to be a tech who will remove a virus on the your computer or like the one above, providing refunds to customers, it's all a hoax. Their goal is to trick consumers into giving them financial info, remote access to their computers, or paying for bogus software they don't need.

Anyone who gets these types of calls should hang up immediately and [file a complaint with the FTC](#). Consumers who paid for bogus tech support or tech support refunds using a credit card should contact their credit card company and ask to reverse the charges.

Learn more about [tech support refund scams](#) in the FTC's latest consumer blog post, and stay a step ahead of the latest scams by subscribing to [Scam Alerts](#). * FTC.gov