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News Release

BBB Warns Against Swine Flu Scams

VICTORIA, BC - Relying on reports from online security experts, Better Business Bureau is warning consumers to be on the lookout for fraudulent e-mails and Web sites trying to take advantage of the current swine flu outbreak.

"Scammers read newspapers, watch TV and surf the Internet and they know that by using a hook from the day's top headlines, that they'll be able to catch lots of fish," said Rosalind Scott, BBB spokesperson. "Right now, issues associated with swine flu and a potential pandemic are of global interest and that means scammers have a very large pond to go phishing in."

[According to McAfee Avert Labs](#), an online security company, spammers began pumping out e-mails as soon as the first accounts of swine flu were being reported in the news, accounting for two percent of all spam messages. The messages include such subject lines as, "Madonna caught swine flu!" and "Swine flu in Hollywood!" The company reports that the e-mails do not contain malware but often link to online pharmacies.

[According to F-Secure Corp.](#), another online security company, more than 250 Web sites with the term "swine flu" have been registered within the first few days following the announcement of the outbreak and predict that the scams artists are preparing to use such Web sites in a variety of different online scams. F-Secure also reports that one Web site is already selling a "Swine Flu Survival Guide" PDF for \$19.95.

BBB offers the following advice to avoid swine flu scams:

- Avoid opening e-mail from an unknown source and do not click on any links in the body of the e-mail or open any attachments. Instead, delete the e-mail or report it to the Federal Trade Commission by forwarding the e-mail to spam@uce.gov.
- Don't believe online offers for vaccinations against swine flu because a vaccine does not exist. For more information on swine flu and updates on progress in fighting the outbreak, go to www.nml-lnm.gc.ca/index-eng.htm
- Make sure your anti-virus and anti-spyware software is up to date and all operating system security patches have been installed.

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**To schedule an interview,
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