

HOW TO PREVENT UNWANTED CALLS AND PROTECT AGAINST FRAUD

You care for an elderly parent, relative or sick friend. Perhaps you call, to brighten up their day. Maybe you do much more. Bringing happiness to their life is very rewarding but can sometimes be challenging.

However, you can't be there all the time. Studies show that loneliness and social isolation can impact gravely on quality of life and well-being. There's a significant and lasting effect on blood pressure [1], and links to poor sleep [2], dementia and Alzheimer's [3], depression [4] and higher mortality rates [5]. What can you do?

Konnekt's series of articles helps you improve the quality of life for the elderly or sick you care about. In this **part 2**, we share recommendations on how to prevent unwanted calls and door-knockers, and reduce the risk of becoming a victim of scams and fraud.

We Have Your Number

Grandma Mary hates telemarketers and door-knockers. They call during her nap and meal times. She becomes stressed, angry or frightened, and paranoid about what they want or how they found her. Their accents and quick-fire sales talk scare her. They make her miss the comfort of her friends.

In contrast, Mary's son-in-law Bob plays games with unwanted visitors: He keeps them talking for as long as possible, tries to convert them to his own religion, sells them imaginary products and asks for their personal phone numbers so that he can call them during their own dinner time! This strategy would definitely not work for Mary.

The ABS reported that over 1.2 million Australians or 6.7% of the population aged 15 years and over fell victim to scams and fraud in one year. Of these, an estimated three in five lost money (on average, \$2,000 each) totalling \$1.4 billion per year [6].

How can you protect your "Mary" (your loved one) from unwanted callers and fraud?

Stopping unwanted callers

Fortunately, Australia has strict privacy laws, a government authority and several products and services to help:

- **DNCR.** Get your "Mary" on the ACMA's **Do Not Call Register**. Visit www.donotcall.gov.au or call 1300 792 958 to register her telephone number. Registrations are permanent as of April 2015. Charities and political parties are exempt and may still call. Note that this will work with legitimate Australian organisations, but not the scammers.
- **Ask politely.** By law, telemarketers must not contact you if you're on ACMA's register. Prompt Mary to ask politely (and repeatedly if necessary) to be taken off their list, and if the caller persists, to ask for the supervisor. Write this down for Mary, put it up near her phone and keep a notepad and several pens nearby.

- **Silent number.** Get Mary's number unlisted from directories by contacting her phone company. Charges vary (and there are exemptions to the charge).
Note that this may also block her number from being displayed to the people she calls, apart from emergency services (000). If Mary uses an alarm/safety monitoring service or an emergency pendant/bracelet that uses her phone line, it may prevent the service from responding correctly or quickly; check with the service provider first!
- **Smart ring.** Assign a different ringtone to Mary's home phone for her friends, family and known callers. Teach Mary to ignore other calls or let them be recorded and screened.
- **Voice screening.** Get Mary a speakerphone answering machine. Mary can listen to the caller's voice before deciding whether to pick up the handset.
- **Number screening.** Subscribe Mary to Calling Number Display (**CND**) and get her a compatible phone or attachment that can store the last hundred numbers and the time and date of each call. The better phones let you store the names of Mary's friends and frequent callers so that Mary can see the name of the person calling (or "unknown") before deciding whether to pick up the call.
- **Call forward selected callers.** If a particular caller becomes a nuisance, call-forward just his number to another number (such as your own) or block it. If you forward it to a mobile, the mobile will display the caller's number – unless the caller has blocked the display of his number.
- **Call tracing.** Malicious calls are illegal, should be reported and can often be traced – even if the caller has blocked his number.
- **CND blocking.** Calling Number Display Blocking (CND Blocking), sometimes known as Call Blocking or Line Blocking, hides Mary's number when she makes a call. This can be useful if she often calls organizations, charities or people and doesn't want them to know her number. For example: When she calls a vendor for product information, the vendor cannot record Mary's number and therefore can't call her back later without her permission.

CND Blocking can be applied on a single call by dialling 1831 before the number.

To apply CND Blocking by default on all outgoing calls, call the service provider – but first, please read our warnings about monitoring services described under "Silent number" above.

Door-knockers

Door-to-door sales people target the elderly, sick and disabled because they are often home during the day, sometimes lonely, and more prone to high-pressure sales tactics. We suggest:

- Display a sticker or sign saying "Do Not Knock. Sales people: Please note that unsolicited door knocking here is unlawful." Get your free stickers at <http://donotknock.org.au/take-action/get-the-sticker-2/>.
- If you're sold something and change your mind, there's a 10-day cooling-off period.
- Visit <http://donotknock.org.au/> for tips on how to complain, legal rights, and avoiding high-pressure sales.

KONNEKT VIDEOPHONE STOPS UNWANTED CALLS

- No unwanted calls: Blocks telemarketers, fraudsters and unknown callers
- See who is calling: Shows the caller's name in BIG letters
- Face-to-face calling: See your caller and be reassured that it's a friend
- Learn more about the incredibly simple Videophone: www.konnekt.com.au

Conclusion

In this article, we've shown you how to help your loved ones avoid becoming victims of scams and fraud by helping prevent unwanted calls and door-knockers. In the **next article** of our series, we'll help you **reduce your worry** and **make it easier to check on loved ones** with some easy tips and ingenious products and services.

Konnekt is an Australian company that has developed an incredibly simple, one-touch Videophone. The elderly and sick can talk **face-to-face** with family and friends, as often as they want, without the travel. To learn about the Konnekt Videophone or to subscribe to receive future Konnekt articles with tips to help improve quality of life, visit Konnekt at www.konnekt.com.au.

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