

Tips to save money while shopping this holiday season

Holiday shopping is expected to look much different this year due to the pandemic, with record numbers of consumers heading to online stores for gifts.

“Shopping online has become the norm to avoid crowds and stay healthy,” said Michael Sullivan, a personal financial consultant with Take Charge America, a national nonprofit credit counseling and debt management agency. “But the ease of clicking ‘add to cart’ can quickly result in spending more than you planned and exceeding your holiday budget.”

Sullivan shares five tips to secure savings:

Keep a Budget for Each Person: Before you start clicking, determine a clear budget for everyone on your good list — and stick to it by avoiding unnecessary extras or accessories. These seemingly small purchases can result in spending more than you intended.

Use Discounted Gift Cards: Sites like Card Cash and Raise feature discounted gift cards from many retailers, including Target and Amazon. If you can find a high-value card with even a small discount, you can save some cash on your holiday purchases.

Look for Coupon Codes: The in-

ternet is full of promo codes offering everything from discounts to free shipping or free samples. Search sites like Groupon, RetailMeNot and Honey to uncover savings.

Install a Cash-Back Browser Extension: Internet browser extensions like Rakuten and Ibotta enable you to earn a small percentage of cash back at many popular retailers. Usually, you’ll get a quarterly payout in the form of a gift card, check or deposit, depending on the service.

Use a Cash-Back Credit Card: If you already have a credit card that offers rewards, such as cash back or gift cards, you can use these perks for presents.

For more resources on how to save — during the holidays season and the rest of the year — visit the Take Charge America Education Center.

Founded in 1987, Take Charge America, Inc. is a nonprofit agency offering financial education and counseling services including credit counseling, debt management, student loan counseling, housing counseling and bankruptcy counseling. To learn more, visit www.takechargeamerica.org or call (888) 822-9193.

