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TIPS FOR COLLECTING YOUR TAX INFORMATION

1. Set up a folder, clearly marked 2010 TAX INFO. I like a brightly colored folder. As your information comes in the mail, just drop it in the folder.
 - Don't worry about the order, just put the document it in the folder.
 - Most drug stores and certainly the large chains can print out your prescription information for the year.
 - Your health insurance company can print out your claims and payment information.
 - SET UP A 2011 FOLDER NOW. Then just put your contribution, medical and other information into the folder throughout the year.
2. For charitable contributions, you need documentation such as a cancelled check or letter from the donee organization supporting the contribution. For donations of more than \$250 you need written substantiation from the organization. Review your contribution information and obtain letters where necessary.
3. For noncash donations, donations must have been in "good used condition" at the time of donation. What was donated must be "reasonably detailed" and you can obtain value information from the Salvation Army or Goodwill Industries websites. For donations with a value over \$250 you must have written acknowledgement from the charitable organization.
4. The IRS requires that you maintain contemporaneous logs for vehicle mileage. This means that you are supposed to note your business trips at the time of the trip. If you use a computer or smart-phone application to document your business usage, be sure to back these up or print them out to keep with your tax records.
5. Make a copy of your prior year tax return and use it to check off documents as your receive them. For example, check off your 1099s as they come in. This way you will know what is missing.
 - Partnership returns are not due until April 18, 2011 so you may have to extend your return if you do not receive all your K-1s in time.
 - *Your year-end investment statements in addition to the 1099 may contain important information about fees, interest, capital gains and losses. Put them with the 1099s.*
6. Please note that the failure to accurately report your income and deductions on your income tax return may subject you to interest and penalties, which can be substantial.