

Using Apps to Support Your Health

Introduction to Apps

What is an app?

- Your smartphone displays a screen with several small icons called “apps”, which is the short form for “applications”.
- Apps can be used for many different tasks, such as: writing notes, taking and viewing photos, browsing the web, reading the news, texting, audio and video calling, and more.

What are the types of apps?

- **Communication apps** such as WhatsApp, iMessage, Zoom
- **Utility apps** such as Reminder, Weather, Calculator
- **Entertainment apps** such as YouTube, Netflix, Spotify
- **Health apps** such as Health Gateway and Headspace

How Apps Can Support Your Health?

Apps help you to self-manage your health and wellness

1. Mental health
2. Medication management
3. Sleep
4. Exercise
5. Health tracking
6. Access to care

Apps help you to access healthcare and view your personal health information

- Health apps may allow you to view your health information and access care online. For example:
- Some healthcare providers may use secure portal apps as a confidential messaging system with their patients.
 - There are apps that can be used to access virtual care by allowing you to schedule and participate in some types of healthcare appointments.
 - You can look up information online using apps, including locating health services near you or viewing your past medical history.

Tips for Choosing a Quality App

More trustworthy:



- Designed by a reputable organization.
- Has been downloaded by many users and has many positive reviews.
- Does not try to sell you a product or service.
- Clearly explains how your information will be protected through a privacy policy.

Less trustworthy:



- Not designed by a reputable organization.
- Has been downloaded by a small number of users and has many negative reviews.
- Tries to sell you a product or service.
- Is not clear about how your information will be protected, and may not have a privacy policy.

Selecting Apps that Meet Your Goals



Meets your health needs



Endorsed by someone you trust



Requests little to no sensitive information



Includes up-to-date information



Available in a language you are comfortable using

Precautions When Using Health Apps

- Often apps access your location or other data to track your progress to function optimally.
- Be cautious if you are asked to share sensitive information, such as:
 - Date of birth
 - Address
 - Personal Health Number (PHN)
 - Social Insurance Number (SIN)
 - Identification documents, such as passport or driver's license
 - Personal financial information

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Using apps

How to Install an App

1. Connect your smartphone or tablet to the internet and go to the app store.
2. In the search bar, type the name of the app you wish to install.
3. Select “Get” or “Install” to start downloading the app on to your device. Then, open it by tapping on it from your home screen.

Your Preferences When Setting Up Apps

- **Notification preferences:** Notification preferences is a way for you to set up your apps so that you can choose the type of alerts you receive from any app.
- **Permissions and restrictions preferences:** Apps might require access to specific features on your phone to perform its intended functions optimally by sending you a notification which you can allow or deny.
- **Language preferences:** To check if the app you are using is available in multiple languages, you can open the app, go into settings and see if the app has a language option.

How to Uninstall an App

1. Tap and hold the app icon until you see a list of options appear. Then select “Remove App”.
2. Your phone will prompt you to confirm the uninstallation. To proceed, select “Delete App”.