

# Apple and Johnson & Johnson team up on study to reduce stroke risk: How to volunteer

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Can the Apple Watch and an app on your iPhone reduce the likelihood

you'll have a stroke?

Apple and Johnson & Johnson have launched a voluntary randomized nationwide study to explore that question. The study is meant to determine whether the iPhone and Apple Watch can accelerate the diagnosis of a leading cause of stroke.

That would be [atrial fibrillation](#), or AFib, an irregular and often [rapid heart rate](#) that causes about 130,000 deaths and 750,000 hospitalizations each year in the U.S., Johnson & Johnson said.

Up to 30% of cases go undiagnosed until life-threatening complications occur. Worldwide, about 33 million people have the condition. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, AFib, the most common sustained cardiac arrhythmia, results in 158,000 deaths and 454,000 hospitalizations each year.

The Apple Watch Series 5, which costs \$399 or more, as well as the Series 4 have an irregular heart rhythm notification feature and an FDA-cleared ECG app, both of which are designed to detect AFib.

As part of the study, some participants can get the Series 5 for as little as \$49 plus tax, or even borrow it for free for the duration of the study, after which you are supposed to return it.

Apple and Johnson & Johnson previously announced their collaboration in January.

And some study participants can earn \$150 or more, based on a points system tied to the activities you are asked to complete, such as answering surveys or meeting other goals.

The study is open to U.S. adults aged 65 and older. In addition to

meeting the age requirements, you will need an iPhone 6s or later (running iOS 12.2 or later), plus traditional Medicare.

The study is meant to last three years. During the first two-year phase, participants will be asked to complete actions in a Heartline app you download from the App Store. During the final phase, you will not be required to complete any actions, but Medicare [health](#) care claims and iPhone and Apple Watch data (if applicable) will be collected to assess clinical outcomes, the companies said.

Participants can withdraw at any time.

## **Is my Apple health data kept private?**

Apple and Johnson & Johnson say that they are committed to protecting your privacy. The captured data is encrypted and will not be sold, the companies say.

But authorized third-party service providers responsible for data collection, storage, and processing will have access to your data, including [contact information](#), so they can communicate with you during the study if needed.

If AFib is detected, you're advised to seek [medical attention](#).

Johnson & Johnson and Apple typically will only have access to "coded study data," meaning directly identifying information such as your name and contact information will be replaced with a unique code that is randomly assigned.

Still, as part of the FAQ (frequently asked questions) about the study, the companies say that while "We'll make every reasonable effort to keep your information safe and protect the confidentiality of your data;

however, total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. There is still a risk of unauthorized access to or disclosure of your personally identifiable information, including your health information."

## Apple seeks health cures

Paul Burton, [vice president](#), medical affairs, [internal medicine](#), at Janssen Scientific Affairs, which is part of Johnson & Johnson, says that by the 2025 timeframe, "wearable digital devices will be foundational in the way diseases are diagnosed and patients are funneled to care."

Along those lines, Apple has been an active partner in health studies.

In November 2017, for example, Apple teamed up with the Stanford University School of Medicine on an Apple Heart Study app that uses the heart rate sensor inside the Apple Watch to collect data on irregular heart rhythms.

Apple also hopes iPhone owners will store medical records inside the Health app.

CEO Tim Cook has previously said, "I think you'll be able to look back at some point in the future and Apple's greatest contribution will have been to people's health. I think it's that big."

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