

Apple and Google team up to send you notifications if you've been exposed to COVID-19

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Apple and Google teamed up to develop push notifications that let iOS and Android users know if they might have been exposed to COVID-19.

The companies announced the news on Tuesday and the effort is called Exposure Notifications Express. It's an opt-in based system that lets your local public health agency alert you to potential coronavirus exposure via a notice on your smartphone. It'll also allow the agency to guide residents on actions to take if they've been exposed, according to Apple and Google.

The development picks up where the company's other collaborative effort left off. They previously worked together to create Bluetooth technology that helped [health agencies](#) develop mobile apps that can identify people who've been near with someone infected with the coronavirus.

Constant digital surveillance raises a number of questions regarding privacy: Will your location data be sold? How will it be used, and who has access to it?

The companies said the alerts to smartphone users are built on their privacy-optimized Exposure Notification framework, which they claim doesn't share location data from a specific smartphone with the government. Instead, it relies on random Bluetooth identifiers that don't record anything regarding your identity, the companies said.

Apple and Google say they do not use contact tracing to store users' location data.

Apple device users will start getting alerts on Tuesday, while Google will begin rolling out Android changes within a month. You have to actively agree to start receiving the alerts and can opt-out at any time, the companies said.

Early studies suggested that 60% of people needed to enable contact tracing in order for [mobile apps](#) to be effective in helping to contain an

outbreak. Apple and Google said that exposure notifications can be effective at much lower levels of adoption.

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