

# Will you share gynecological and hearing data through an Apple research app on the iPhone?

15 November 2019, by Edward C. Baig, Usa Today



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Are you willing to share information about your menstrual cycles or hearing loss on your iPhone and Apple Watch to contribute to medical research?

Starting Thursday, you can download the Research app in the App Store and see if you are eligible to participate in the first three long-term medical studies. Apple announced the app in September.

There's a women's health study conducted in partnership with Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the NIH's National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) with the goal of advancing understanding of [menstrual cycles](#) and how they relate to various health conditions: polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), infertility, osteoporosis, menopausal transition.

A second study is focused on the heart and movement and is designed to examine the factors

that impact cardiovascular health and potentially cause a person's mobility and overall well-being to deteriorate.

This study, which requires an iPhone 6s or later and an Apple Watch (any model), can help signal early warning signs of atrial fibrillation (AFib), heart disease or declining mobility. Apple is partnering with Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and the American Heart Association. The study will likely last at least five years.

Lastly, Apple is teaming with the University of Michigan on a hearing study that will leverage headphone usage and environmental sound exposure data through the iPhone and the Noise app on an Apple Watch (Series 4 and Series 5) to explore how both can impact a person's ability to hear over time.

Participants will be randomly assigned to two groups to assess if Health app notifications, when loud sounds are detected, can motivate users to modify their listening behaviors. Apple says it will share data from the study with the World Health Organization to raise awareness around safe listening practices.

Users will corroborate the data by answering qualitative survey questions—did you attend a concert, say, or get a hearing aid?—and take baseline tests to determine where their hearing levels are at as a starting point. Participants will also be able to take hearing tests, using headphones, through the app.

## Apple claims your privacy will be protected

Even as scrutiny of big tech grows in Washington and statehouses around the country, the increasingly data-hungry industry is still in hot

pursuit of your personal information.

Arguably nothing other than financial information is more sensitive than a person's medical history. Medical institutions have long had safeguards for patient privacy when storing medical information, but new questions are being raised about how tech companies treat medical information after the mishandling of people's information in other areas.

It was revealed earlier this week by the Wall Street Journal that Google is working with the Ascension health-care system on an initiative to collect and analyze personal health records of millions of people in 21 states. The initiative, known as Project Nightingale, is now under investigation by The Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Health and Human Services, the Journal reported.

In a blog post, Google pledged that patient data could not and would not be combined with data the company collects on consumers.

Earlier this month, Google said it planned to buy Fitbit, which has stockpiled mountains of information on people's [health](#), for \$2.1 billion.

Amazon and Microsoft also have designs on the healthcare industry.

Apple says data collected through the Research app will be encrypted on the iPhone and that it does not have access to it. It's up to you whether you feel comfortable sharing the data. You can also leave a study at any time.

THEN If you go with this set-up, then delete the graphs I moved from below...

Inside the Research app, you can read about the requirements for each study, which includes filling out a profile with your date of birth, contact information, and other information. You'll also have to sign consent forms.

With your permission, Apple's academic or medical partners may reach out directly if a concerning medical issue surfaces. Apple would still not have access to identifiable data. Apple says its partners can only use study data to support their research

and that data will not be sold.

In March, Apple reported the results of an eight-month study conducted with Stanford Medicine, in which 400,000 people wearing an Apple Watch passively helped researchers evaluate irregular rhythm notifications.

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APA citation: Will you share gynecological and hearing data through an Apple research app on the iPhone? (2019, November 15) retrieved 14 May 2021 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2019-11-gynecological-apple-app-iphone.html>

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