



## Types of Technology in Aged Care: Smartphones & Mobile Apps

Aged care services are increasingly embracing innovative digital technologies to improve the care experiences of older people and to enable care workers to do more, even with fewer resources (e.g., staff, financial). This information sheet on smartphones and mobile Apps is part of a series covering types of technology currently used in aged care. These information sheets are available on the [ARIIA website](https://www.ariia.org.au).

### What are smartphones and mobile apps?

Smartphones are mobile devices that can perform many of the functions of a computer, on a smaller scale. They usually have a touchscreen interface, access to the internet, and the capability to run downloaded apps. A mobile app is a software program that has been developed to perform a specific function (e.g., playing games, connecting with loved ones, tracking health, or searching on the internet) and can be downloaded onto a smartphone. [1]

### How are smartphones and mobile apps used in aged care?

Smartphones and apps are playing an increased role in promoting people's health and wellbeing. There are many types of apps available to meet different needs of older adults. These may include social apps (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp), apps to remind people to take medication or drink more water, or health-monitoring apps. The built-in sensors on smartphones, such as accelerometers (to detect movement) and GPS (to detect location) generate real-time data that can be linked to apps for personal health feedback or used by healthcare providers. There are also apps that have been designed for aged care services to improve communication and quality of care. These apps may provide platforms for care staff, older people and their families, and other members of the care team to share relevant information about the person they provide care for (e.g., appointments, medications, changes in care preferences).

### How can smartphones and mobile apps benefit the aged care sector?

Potential benefits of smartphones and mobile apps in aged care may include:

- Improved communication (reduced social isolation and feelings of loneliness)
- Increased engagement
- Remote monitoring
- Efficient care management (e.g., medication and appointments)
- Increased independence. [1]

### Examples of mobile technology in aged care

Some examples of apps used in aged care include:

- **CareApp**: A communication app that can be used to bring providers, residents, care workers, and families together to improve care by increasing transparency and accountability.
- **palliAGED apps**: This app can provide nurses and GPs working in aged care with access to palliative care information to help them care for people approaching the end of their life.
- **CareKeeper**: An app that enables residential aged care staff to be clear on their list of tasks and to document by the resident's side via a mobile device, providing more opportunity for a personalised connection.

### References

1. Banskota S, Healy M, Goldberg EM. 15 smartphone apps for older adults to use while in isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. *West J Emerg Med*. 2020;21(3):514-525.

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ARIIA was established as an independent, not-for-profit organisation, set up to lead the advancement of the aged care workforce capability by promoting and facilitating innovation and research to improve the quality of aged care for all Australians.

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