



**Best Practices for Mobile Health?  
There's an APP Guide For That**  
AHIMA Develops a Best Practice Primer for Consumers

just think APP



This guide is designed to help you understand and make educated decisions about using mobile health applications (“app”).

When considering a mobile app, **JUST THINK APP.**

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**Advice** what you should consider before downloading a mobile health app.

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**Privacy** what you should know about the privacy and security of a mobile health app.

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**Personal** what you should think about in terms of your personal health information when using a mobile health app.

## What is a Mobile Health Application?

The term **mobile health** or **mHealth** is used to describe the use of devices such as smartphones or tablets in the practice of medicine, and the downloading of health-related applications or “apps.” This helps with the flow of information over a mobile network and can improve communication between you and your doctor. Whether you have a specific condition that needs monitoring or simply wish to improve your overall health, there is likely a mobile app to help you achieve your goals.

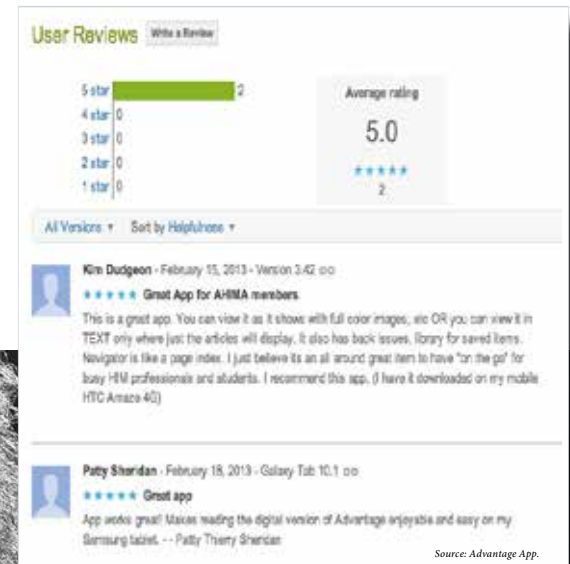
There are thousands of healthcare-related mobile applications. Some are free; others must be purchased at varying costs. There are many apps that provide valuable resources to benefit you and your healthcare provider. On the other hand, there are just as many apps that offer quick fixes and may not follow established medical guidelines.



## Advice:

When looking for the right app for you, consider these questions:

- Why are you considering this app? Is it to track an existing condition or to improve your overall health and well being?
- Did your doctor recommend this app?
- Will the app help you reach your health goal?
- Is the app helping you learn more about your personal health?
- Have you checked user reviews before downloading? Is the app easy to use? Are there any user concerns or problems with this app?



**User Reviews** Write a Review

5 star 2  
4 star 0  
3 star 0  
2 star 0  
1 star 0

Average rating  
**5.0**  
★★★★★  
2

All Versions Sort by Highest

**Kim Dudgeon** · February 15, 2013 · Version 3.42 00  
★★★★★ **Great App for AHIMA members**  
This is a great app. You can view it as it shows with full color images, etc OR you can view it in TEXT only where just the articles will display. It also has back issues, library for saved items. Navigator is like a page index. I just believe it's an all around great item to have "on the go" for busy HIM professionals and students. I recommend this app. (I have it downloaded on my mobile HTC Amaze 4G)

**Patty Sheridan** · February 18, 2013 · Galaxy Tab 10.1 00  
★★★★★ **Great app**  
App works great! Making reading the digital version of Advantage enjoyable and easy on my Samsung tablet. -- Patty Therry Sheridan

Source: Advantage App.



## Privacy:

To ensure the privacy of your personal health information, consider the following:

### Privacy Policy and Settings

- Review privacy settings of both the app and your mobile device. Know your options and what the default settings are.
- Some organizations are now certifying privacy policies for mobile apps to ensure they meet guidelines. Look for a sign of certification such as the TRUSTe® seal.



- Read the app's privacy policy. Consider the following:
  - What information is collected and how is it used?
  - What data is collected automatically?
  - Does the device collect precise, real time location data?
  - Does the app use geo-targeting (i.e., targets by city and zip code)?
  - Do third parties have access to information obtained by the app?
  - Does the user have the ability to opt-out?
  - What other tracking technologies are used, if any?
  - Who is the contact for questions or issues?
  - If there is no privacy policy, contact the app developer for more information



## Privacy:

### Security

Security is also vital in the protection of personal information. Here are some tips to help keep your information secure:

- Utilize password protection and encryption where provided.
- Record your phone's identifier somewhere safe. An example is the electronic serial number used for cell phone activation (12-digit number).



- Use a locator service, such as the GPS capability on your smart phone.
- Use a remote wipe, which lets you erase your handheld's data in case it is lost or stolen.
- Don't share confidential and personal health information through texts, as texting is not secure.



## Personal:

The information you collect and store on an app is personal, but it is important to be able to share this information with your healthcare provider. Be sure to consider the following questions:

- Are you able to share health information from the mobile health app with your healthcare provider?
- Does your mobile health app notify you of important reminders related to your healthcare (for example, appointments, medication refills, and more)?
- Do you know how to delete the data you have entered in the mobile health app?
- In case of theft, loss, or malfunction, do you have your most important personal health information stored in a secondary location where it is easily accessible?

**Mobile health** applications can make the collection, storage, and sharing of personal health information easier and safer. But as with all new technology, be aware of the potential dangers and drawbacks. Follow this guide to ensure you pick the app best for you and your health. **JUST THINK APP!**

