



A virus? On an iPhone? While there are many that would say it's not possible, it most certainly is, and if your iPhone or iPad is acting oddly then you've come to the right place.

Here's how to find out if your iPhone or iPad has a virus, and how best to get rid of it.

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Has your iPhone got a virus?

Probably you don't have a virus on your iPhone, but it's not true to say iPhones don't get viruses. There have been a few successful virus penetrations on iPhones over the years, including the state-sponsored espionage attacks via the Pegasus spyware attacks, and AdThief, which affected a number of jailbroken iPhones back in 2014.

If you are unlucky enough to have been targeted in such an attack then, according to a support document, Apple will send a threat notification warning by mail and Message to you. Apple also aims to quickly address any security flaws that are being exploited by such spyware. Here's How to check if your iPhone is infected by NSO's Pegasus spyware.

Apple also offers Lockdown Mode that you can switch on if you are targeted in this way.



Here's how to use Lockdown Mode to protect your iPhone.

Despite this, in all honesty, there's a very, *very* slim chance your iPhone has a virus unless you are a government employee or hold information that bad people want to get hold of.

PROMOTION

Antivirus Deal: Intego Mac Premium Bundle

Get Intego's Mac Premium Bundle X9 with antivirus, [firewall](#), backup and system performance tools for just \$29.99 (down from \$84.99) for the first year.

But those odds are changing, particularly in the [EU](#). That's because Apple is rolling out support for alternatives to the App Store to comply with the Digital Markets Act ([DMA](#)), and there's every chance something unsavoury slips through the cracks.

Since its inception, the iPhone (and later the iPad) has been a closed loop, or "Walled Garden", where Apple, not the user, has the final say on what gets in or out. But that's now a little different, so it pays to be more vigilant

If you are worried about a 'bad actor' infiltrating your device, there's a good chance it's tied to something you've installed, and could be down to an honest bug rather than any system-destroying threat.

We'll run through all the ways you can find out if you have iPhone malware, how to run an iPhone virus scan, and how to remove a virus from your iPhone below.

How to tell if your iPhone has a virus

It's rare, but what if you are one of the unlucky few?

What are the warning signs for a malware infection on your device? After all, it's rare a virus will introduce itself. Here are some things to look out for:

Drops in battery life

Battery life draining more quickly can be a sign that more is going on under the hood of your device for some reason.

You can see if any apps in particular are draining your battery in the background if you go to Settings > Battery and swipe down.

12:33



[Settings](#)

Battery

BATTERY USAGE BY APP [SHOW ACTIVITY](#)

	Facebook	38%
	Safari	10%
	Connected to Charger	
	Slack	8%
	Background Activity	
	Tesco	8%
	Mail	7%
	Notifications	

Check to see if anything is burning through your battery.



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Also checking your iPhone's Battery Health in Settings > Battery > Battery Health & Charging. It could just be your device's cell is deteriorating over time, but it's worth a check for the 30 seconds it'll take.

You will also see details of any apps that are guzzling a lot of battery life -

iPhone is getting hot for no reason

The same can be said about the heat that your phone generates. If you're doing something particularly demanding, like playing hours of a game, you'll naturally see an uptick in temperature.

If the heat is increasing for no discernible reason, when the iPhone *isn't* doing anything particularly taxing, and you've done the usual steps of turning your iPhone off and on again, it's probably a good idea to get it checked out by an Apple Genius bar.

Suspicious apps

While it shouldn't be possible for any apps to be installed on your iPhone without your knowledge, it's worth checking the App Library on your iPhone for any apps in the recently installed section that you don't recognise.

Consider checking your recently installed apps, and delete any that could be tied to the problem. You can easily reinstall your apps once you have confirmed they aren't causing the issues.

Apps that crash often

Are there any apps that are crashing regularly? Crashing isn't a sign of malware, but if the app doesn't run well, it could drain resources elsewhere on your device, making it feel as though there's something wrong with your iPhone.

Try updating the apps via the App Store to see if this helps.

Sudden increases in data or call use

Malware could try to hijack your iPhone and make calls to premium numbers, send data or even take part in cryptocurrency mining, all of which will drain your data or give a nasty surprise when the phone bill arrives. If you spot this, there's a very good chance your device is infected.



Random pop-up messages

Receiving pop-up boxes out of the blue can also be a sign that things are not well with your iPhone. These can be a way to trick you into giving permission for things, as the text you're reading isn't necessarily what you're agreeing to. If you're worried that something may be amiss, turn your iPhone off and back on again to see if the pop-up disappears.

How to fix the cause of the problem

Whether it's malware, a faulty app, a faulty phone or something else you might be able to fix the issue if you follow the steps below.

Don't jailbreak your device

If you jailbroke your iPhone and installed an application from a non-official source whose authenticity is questionable you may have a malicious piece of software on your device and should attempt to isolate and uninstall the culprit.

Check to see if the unexpected happens when you use certain apps

If this is the case—and particularly if it's only one app—then you're probably looking at an app-specific issue, and we'll deal with this in due course. As a rule of thumb, common behavior exhibited by apps that have been hijacked include redirecting you to an unfamiliar web page in Safari, and opening the App Store without permission.

Check if the unexpected behavior happens when you use any app

If the problem continues to occur no matter which apps are open, the chances are that your device is misbehaving because of a [hardware](#) problem, an iOS change that you're not used to yet, or because you or another user of the device has changed a setting, perhaps inadvertently. It's extremely unlikely that malware has penetrated to the heart of the operating system; this would be essentially unprecedented. In any of these cases we would take the device to an Apple Genius Bar.

Find out if a compromised app is causing the problem

Rather than a virus affecting iOS itself, it's possible that you've simply got a problem app.

This doesn't necessarily mean the app is bad or that the developers are at fault; conversely, the fact that an app is legitimate or was made by a reputable company doesn't mean it can't be hijacked by malware or hackers. Because hackers cannot break into iOS itself, one of their most common strategies is to crack a developer kit, which may in turn be used by unwitting app developers. The crooks thus gain the ability to redirect you to a dodgy website when you use the app that was built using the compromised tool.



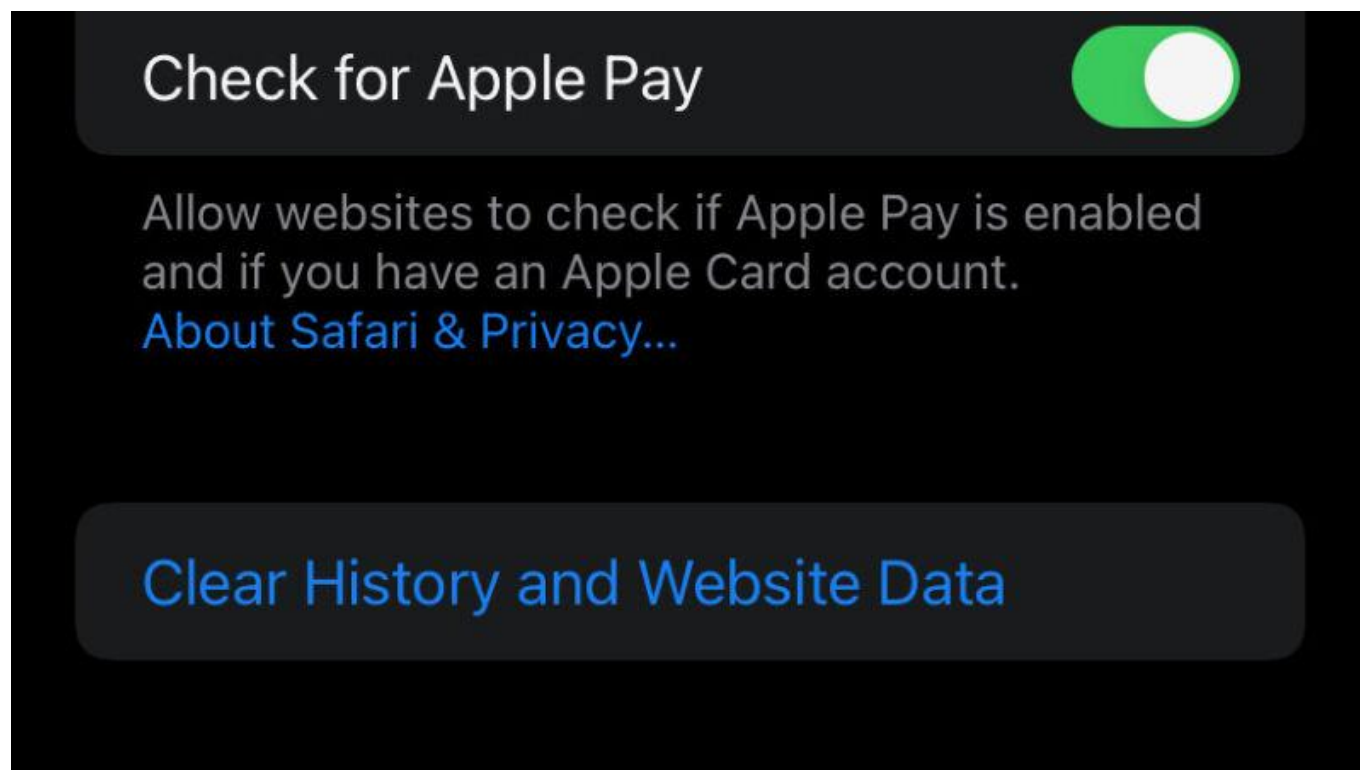
It's usually obvious when one particular app is the culprit, because you only have problems when using it. The usual giveaway sign is that, when you've got that app open, you will periodically be redirected to a web page, or to the App Store, without your permission.

If you think one app is the problem, first of all have a look to see if an updated version of the app is available, since the problem may have been noticed and fixed. Also check the app's website (if it has one) and/or the developers' X (the one we all call Twitter) feed (if they have one) to see if the issue has been reported or discussed in those places. If the devs are contactable then you should report the issue to them. They may be able to offer a solution right away, but even if they can't, they are more likely to find a fix if they know about it.

Assuming that updating the app doesn't solve the problem, uninstall it and try to manage without for a while. If the problem disappears then you've found your culprit, and it's time to decide if you can manage without the app in the long term. Even if you do decide to delete the app permanently, however, remember that you can check in with the developers from time to time and see if a satisfactory update has materialized.

Clear your history and website data

Here's a quick tip that may resolve web page redirect problems. Go to **Settings > Safari > Clear History and Website Data**, then tap **Clear History and Data** to confirm.





Power off and restart your iPhone

Another simple method to clear out a software problem is to power down your device and then restart it. This won't necessarily get rid of a virus, but it can help if an app is playing up.

To do this, hold down the side button and volume up button until the screen changes and the 'slide to power off' slider appears. On an iPhone with Touch ID, you just need to hold down the power button until you see the slider. In either case this should take about four to five seconds. Finally, use the slider to power down the device.

To restart the phone, hold down the power button or side button again. This time it should take about 10 seconds. The Apple logo will appear; at this point you can let go of the button. Wait until the passcode entry screen appears (you need to enter a passcode instead of using Touch ID/Face ID the first time you unlock a phone after powering up) and then unlock the device.

Has this fixed the problem? If not, you may need to take more drastic measures.

Restore your iPhone from a backup

We trust that you back up your iPhone on a regular basis. If so, it'll be easy to restore your iPhone from the most recent backup and see if the problem is removed.

If this doesn't work, you may have included the malware or other problem when you backed up the contents of your iPhone, so try restoring from the second most recent backup, then the one before that, and so on. Hopefully you will find a backup that pre-dates the problem and you'll be able to proceed from there.

For a more detailed look at how to do this, read [how to restore an iPhone from backup](#).

Restore your iPhone as a new device

If none of your backups are malware-free, or the only backups that are malware-free are unusable for some other reason, you may be better off starting from scratch.

Wipe your iPhone by going to **Settings > General > Transfer or Reset iPhone > Erase All Contents and Settings**, then enter your passcode and confirm the process. Wait for the erasure to complete, and then set up the iPhone as a new device.

17:17



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[General](#) Transfer or Reset iPhone



Prepare for New iPhone

Make sure everything's ready to transfer to a new iPhone, even if you don't currently have enough iCloud storage to back up.

[Get Started](#)

[Reset](#)

[Erase All Content and Settings](#)



This is a drastic step. Be sure you've exhausted all other solutions.

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We describe this process in more depth in separate articles: [How to reset an iPhone](#) and [How to set up a new iPhone](#).

Once you've completed setup you'll need to reinstall the apps you want to use (although remember that if an app seemed to be causing the problem you should try living without it for a while and see if things are better), reload songs, photos and videos and get the settings back to the way you like them. It's a pain, but hopefully you'll only need to do it this once.

How to protect your iPhone from malware

The most important thing to do is update iOS or iPadOS regularly. When there is a security flaw Apple is (usually) quick to address it. If you keep the software up to date on your device you should be ok.

The other thing is to only ever install apps from the App Store - not that you can get apps for the iPhone or iPad any other way (for now at least).

The only way you could install apps from outside the App Store would be if you jailbreak your iPhone. We do not recommend jailbreaking your iPhone because it's a very easy way to end up with malware on your device. If you do jailbreak your iPhone, you need to be especially careful about the software you install and the sources you download it from.

Be careful of 'social engineering' attacks: don't open links if you're unsure where they come from. The weakest part of any system, however, is usually the person using the device. Hackers these days often try to trick people into giving away information or logging into fake sites so they can harvest your data.

Always remain vigilant when using your iPhone if you want to keep it secure. For more general advice on protecting yourself from hackers, malware writers and other miscreants, read our [iPhone security tips](#).

Should I use antivirus software on my iPhone or iPad?

The sandboxed nature of iOS means that third-party apps don't have the kind of system-wide access that is required to fully secure a device. Apple would of course argue that this is the reason why iOS is so secure.

Due to this, there isn't much in the way of dedicated antivirus software for iPhone and iPad. There are some packages available, that include privacy controls, data use monitoring, and



warnings about potentially dodgy websites.

We recommend a number of antivirus solutions we have tested, many of which will also cover a iPhone and iPad. Take a look at: [Best Antivirus for Mac](#).

Our recommended antivirus for iPhone and iPad include:

Should I use a VPN on my iPhone or iPad?

You might also want to consider a VPN to protect you when using public Wi-Fi. Check our roundup of the best iPhone VPNs and best iPad VPNs for dedicated advice.