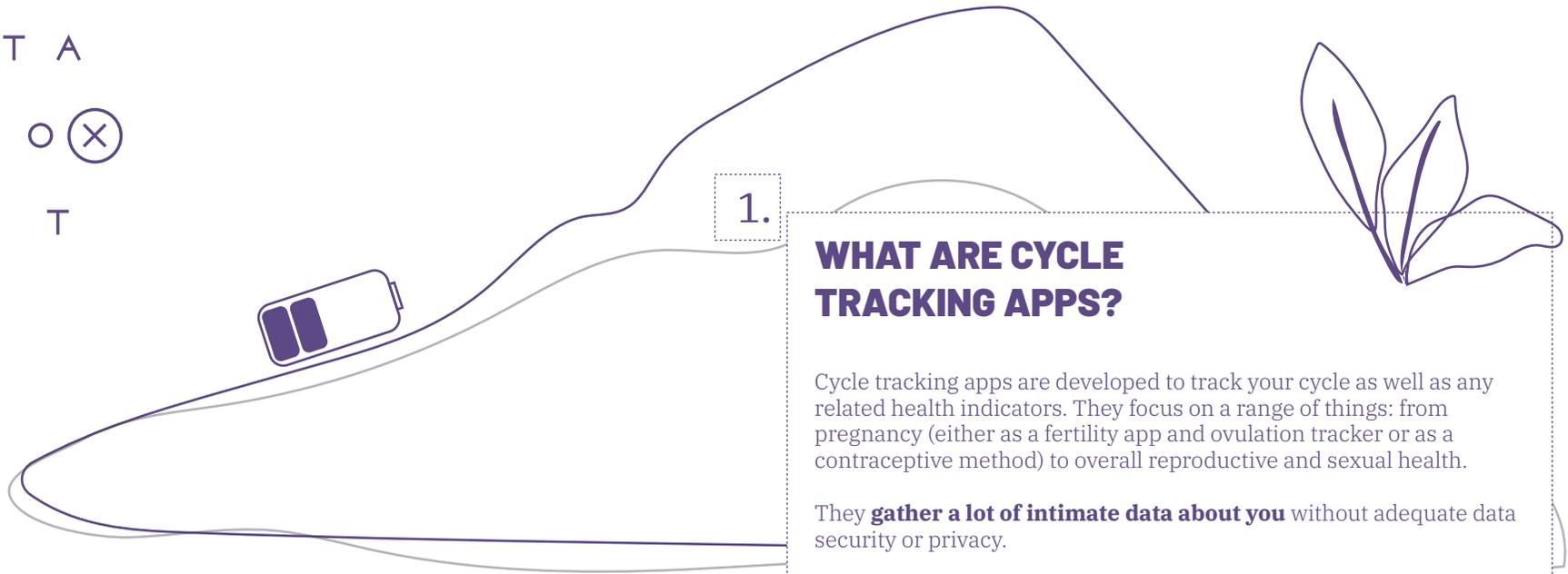


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NONE OF THEIR BUSINESS:

How to choose a private cycle tracking app

Cycle tracking apps are an easy and practical way to track your menstruation and related health indicators (also known as *period trackers* or *fertility tracking apps*). You can keep track of many intimate facts about you such as eating, sleep, mental health, sexual activity, contraceptive methods, and your fertility choices.

With all these tracking options, the companies behind the apps know a lot about you, but **what do they do with this data?**

In this guide, you will learn about cycle tracking apps and **how to pick one that keeps your data safe.**

Let's soak up some knowledge!

1.

WHAT ARE CYCLE TRACKING APPS?

Cycle tracking apps are developed to track your cycle as well as any related health indicators. They focus on a range of things: from pregnancy (either as a fertility app and ovulation tracker or as a contraceptive method) to overall reproductive and sexual health.

They **gather a lot of intimate data about you** without adequate data security or privacy.

Moreover, **many apps share this data with advertisers and monetize it** in different ways.

In a 2019 study, Privacy International found that two of the five apps they investigated shared intimate user information with Facebook even before users agreed to any Terms of Service. This raises serious privacy concerns. The app also shared users' cycle-related tracking information with Facebook: mood, feelings, and health symptoms.

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2.

PRIVACY CRITERIA FOR CYCLE TRACKERS

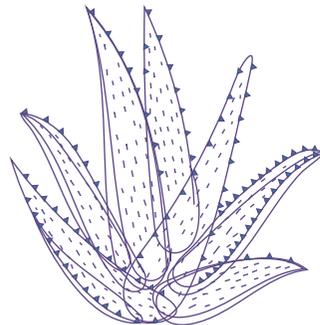
Apps cannot legally promise to keep your data private.

When you agree to an app's Terms of Service agreement, it might say that the data is kept safe and will not be sold, but these agreements can be changed by companies at any point and data that you thought was private might be shared with third parties, research institutes, or even governments.

The only way to prevent this is to use an app that encrypts your data, so the company itself cannot access your data to share it.

There are **four important factors** you should look for in an app when you decide to use one.

- **Data storage:** data should be stored locally and encrypted
- The app **should not share information** with third parties or law enforcement
- It should be easy and **quick to delete your data** from the app
- The app **should not track** your location or other unnecessary background information (camera, microphone, etc)



3.

ALTERNATIVE APPS FOR CYCLE TRACKING

Here are a few examples of cycle tracking apps that—at the time of writing in October 2022—follow these criteria.

Euki

Euki is an app focused on sexual and reproductive health created by Women Help Women, an international non-profit organization working towards reproductive freedom.

Drip

This app is developed by a Hacking Collective. They are funded by public institutions and are not a commercial entity.

Read Your Body

This app is developed by the non-profit The Body Literacy Collective for people seeking to chart their menstrual cycle using the fertility awareness method.

4.

YOUR CYCLE IS YOURS. PERIOD!

In this Data Detox guide you have learned what makes using an app a safe option for cycle tracking. If you're interested in using an alternative to apps to track your cycle, check out the article "**Cycles of Influence: Decide Who Knows Your Body**" at datadetoxkit.org.