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Page: 6

Body and Soul

By: RHIANNON SAWYER

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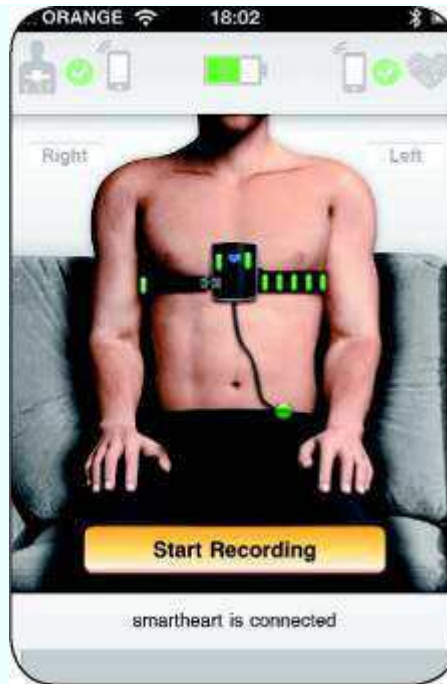


Imagine if you could take your phone out of your pocket and use it as an ultrasound, or get easy access to up-to-date medical information in emergencies? This is the future of your smartphone and it's closer than you think. Here are some groundbreaking ways smartphones are being used to improve your health.



First-aid advice

Product name: St John Ambulance Australia First Aid.
How it works: This app could be just what the doctor ordered in an emergency situation. Covering everything from allergic reactions to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), this could be a lifesaver in your phone.
Our expert says: Dr Steve Hambleton, president of the Australian Medical Association, says: "After calling 000, some very succinct advice on your phone could be the difference between actually giving someone the confidence to get involved or not. Generally, not intervening is what makes things worse."
How to get it: It is available through iTunes.
Price: \$4.49.
Website: itunes.apple.com/au



Heart rate recorder

Product name: Smartheart.
How it works: Smartheart allows you to do an electrocardiogram (ECG) at home. A special device is strapped to your chest, where it records your heart rate by measuring the heart's electro activity. It then connects via Bluetooth to your smartphone, allowing the user to immediately see their ECG in detail and email the results to their doctor. If the device records any abnormalities, the phone sends an alert.
Our expert says: Dr Hambleton believes this type of device could prove useful. "One of the problems we have is that a lot of heart rhythm disturbances only occur intermittently. Getting the recording device to you when the problem is happening has proved difficult," he says. He says this type of device should be used in consultation with a medical practitioner and advises checking the device has undergone rigorous medical review.
Where to get it: Smartheart will be available to buy online in the coming months.
Price: To be announced.
Website: www.getsmartheart.com



Blood pressure tracker

Product name: Blood Pressure Monitor.

How it works: It allows you to track your blood pressure at home. Plug the cuff into your iPhone and the app launches automatically. It records your blood pressure, displays it on a graph and automatically emails your doctor the information.

Our expert says: "Your blood pressure can go up because you're at the doctor's surgery. We want to treat high blood pressure that's occurring most of the time, so that's where this device could come in," Dr Hambleton says. But double-checking the device is important. "You want to ensure that it is accurate."

How to get it: It is available in Europe and will be soon be available in Australia.

Price: \$179.

Website: www.withings.com/en/bloodpressuremonitor

Product name: MobiUS.

How it works: It's an ultrasound imaging system like the ones you find in a doctor's surgery – the only difference is all you need is the wand and a smartphone. The technology may be revolutionary for patients in remote communities or in emergency situations as doctors can immediately share information with specialists.

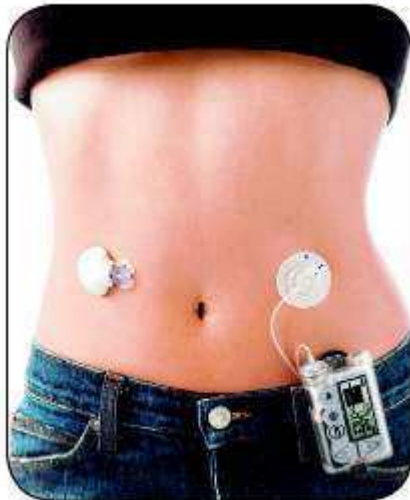
Our expert says: "The problem would be clarity of the image, so connecting to an iPad or tablet, which has a higher-definition screen than a smartphone, will provide a clearer image for analysis," Dr Hambleton says. "Its portability could help in emergencies, even if it's to identify a problem that needs further analysis."

How to get it: MobiUS is currently approved for sale in the US to qualified medical professionals, and is expected to be available in Australia next year.

Price: To be announced.

Website: www.mobisante.com





Insulin manager

Product name: Closing The Loop.

How it works: A trial is underway at Perth's Princess Margaret Hospital for Children for a monitor that is planted under the skin and sends messages to a BlackBerry when the body is low in insulin. The phone tells a pump to produce the amount of insulin needed.

Our expert says: Dr Hambleton says this could offer diabetics a way to manage their illness without constant finger pricking. However, he says rigorous testing is advised.

Price: To be announced.

How to get it: It is still in hospital trials.

bodyandsoul.com.au



+ We review five smartphone apps for new mums and mums-to-be at bodyandsoul.com.au



Alcohol counter

Product name:

iDrinkulator.

How it works: This is an app that tracks your

alcohol consumption. Its conversion tables help you see how your drinking converts into dollars spent and calories consumed over the day, week, month or year. It also displays your calories as a visual "Yuckulator", which shows you what your drinking equates to in junk food. Drink standards are listed according to US and UK measurements.

Our expert says: "There's nothing like actually measuring something to influence behaviour," Dr Hambleton says. However, he is dubious about whether the app will actually change people's behaviour. "When looking at behaviour change, the most likely change is that you'll stop recording your behaviour."

How to get it: The iDrinkulator is available through iTunes.

Price: \$2.99.

Website: itunes.apple.com/au



Did you know? One in 10 Australians have needed to apply first-aid skills and not known how.