

How to scan APK files to check if they contain viruses.

To ensure that the APK files you are about to install are safe, you should scan them beforehand for any potential threats.

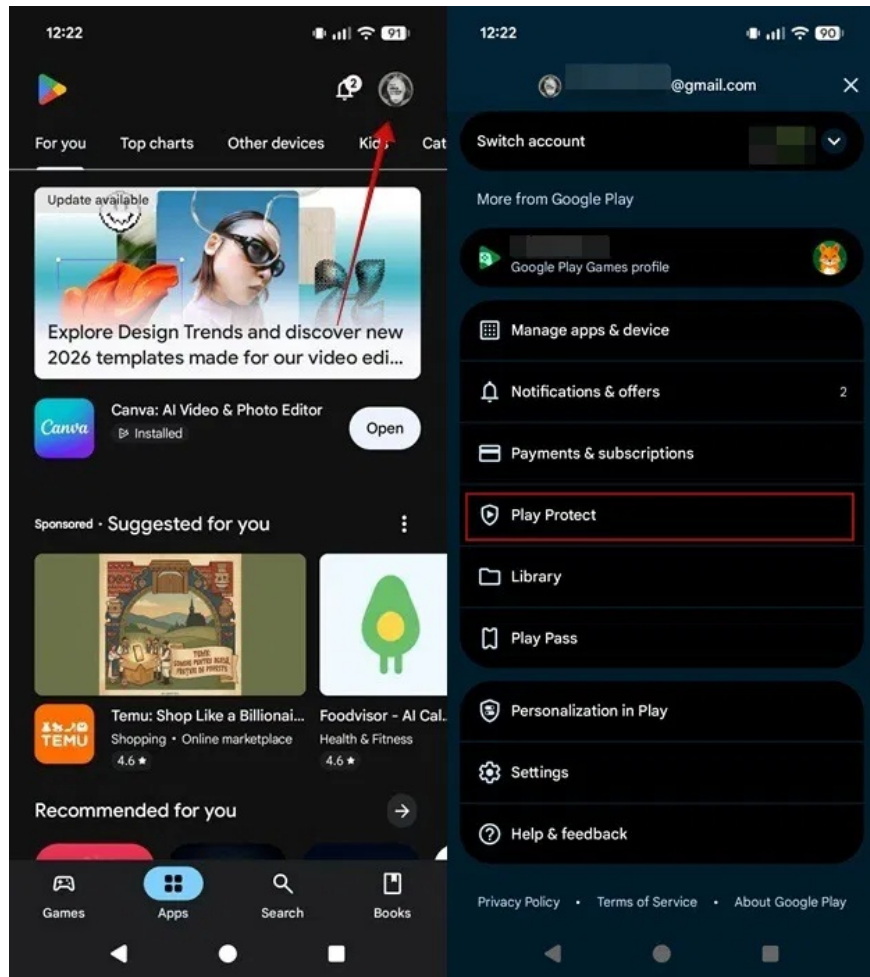
Installing apps from unofficial sources (sideloading) on Android devices is often used to bypass regional restrictions or to receive updates faster. Sometimes, this can be the only option when the desired app is unavailable on the Play Store for some reason. To ensure the APK files you're about to install are safe, you should scan them beforehand for any potential threats. Fortunately, there are several reliable tools, and this article has compiled some of them for you here.

Use your phone's built-in scanning feature.

Most modern Android phones have built-in options that allow you to scan the apps installed on your phone for malicious activity.

Open the Google Play Store app on your Android device (this app is available by default, unless you're using a Huawei phone or accidentally removed the icon from your desktop, you'll find it on your phone).

Tap your Google account profile picture in the upper right corner and select **Play Protect** on the next screen.

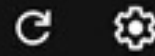


Tap the **Scan** button to have Google scan your phone for app-related issues.

12:22

91

← Play Protect



No harmful apps found

Play Protect scanned moments ago

Scan

Recently scanned apps

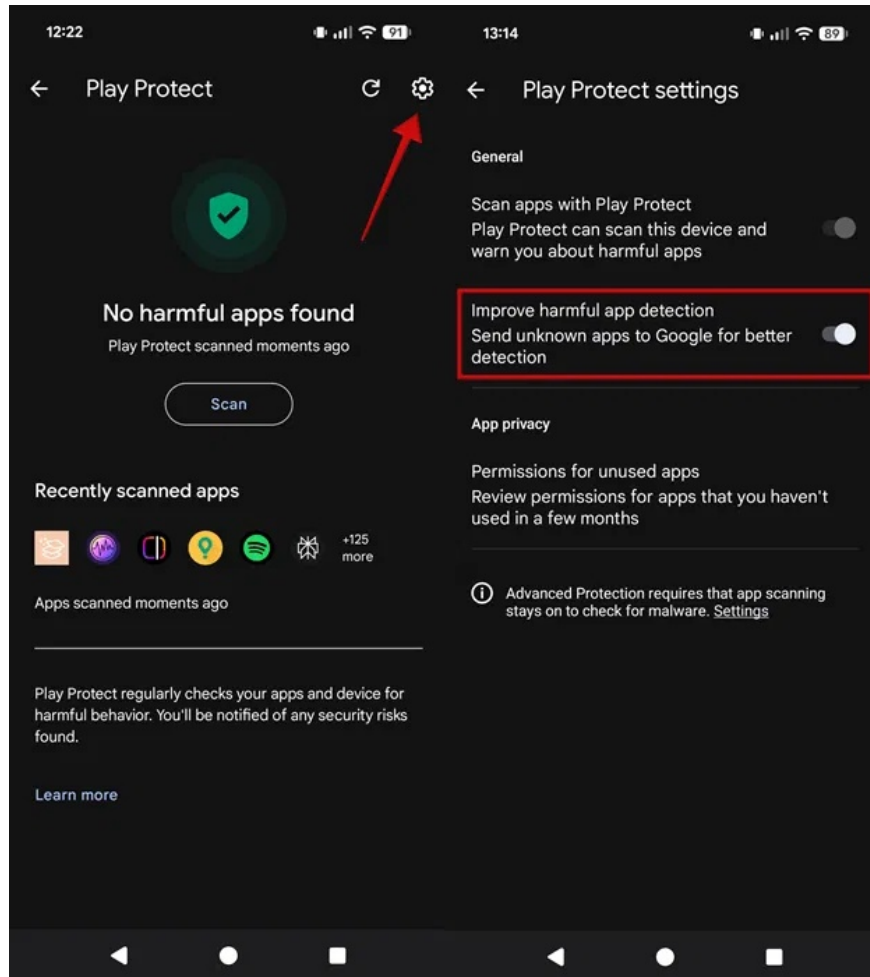


Apps scanned moments ago

Play Protect regularly checks your apps and device for harmful behavior. You'll be notified of any security risks found.

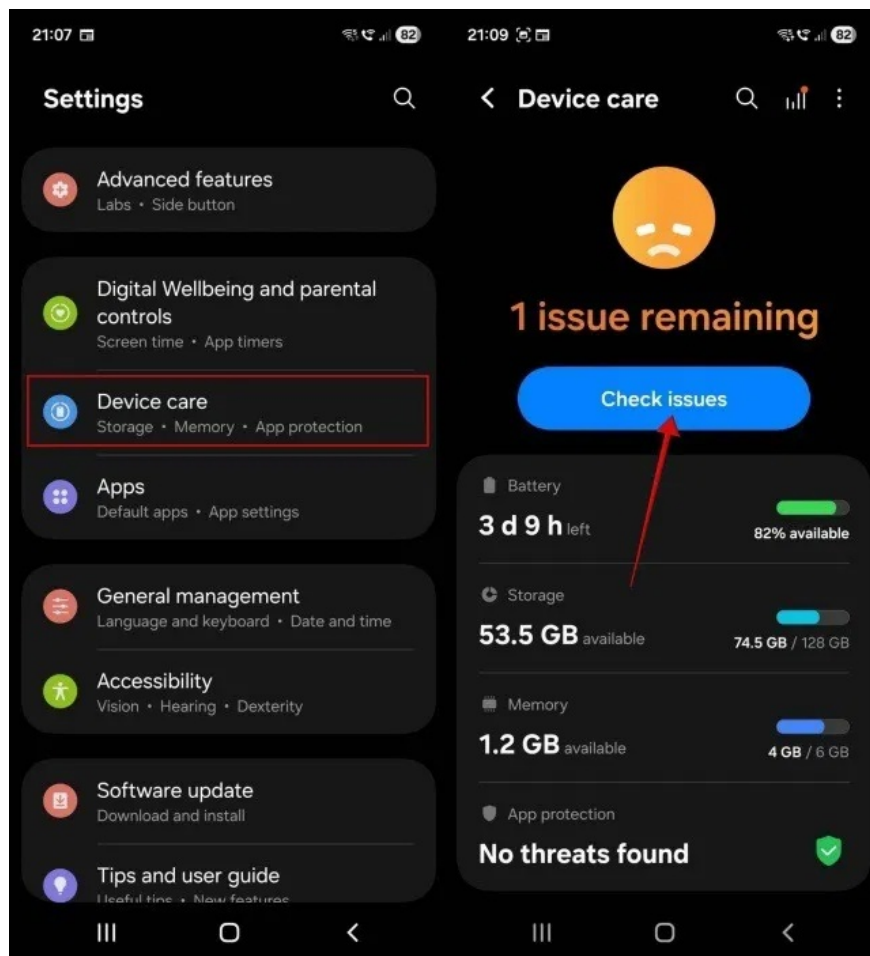
[Learn more](#)

To maximize the effectiveness of Play Protect, tap the gear icon in the upper right corner and toggle the switch next to **Improve harmful app detection** (if it's not already on).



You can also access Play Protect by going to **Settings ? Security and privacy ? App security** .

Smartphones from some manufacturers may have their own protection protocols. For example, Samsung has its own alternative, which you can access by going to **Settings ? Device care** .






To view the results of your Samsung scan (provided by McAfee), click the **Check issues** button .

< Device care

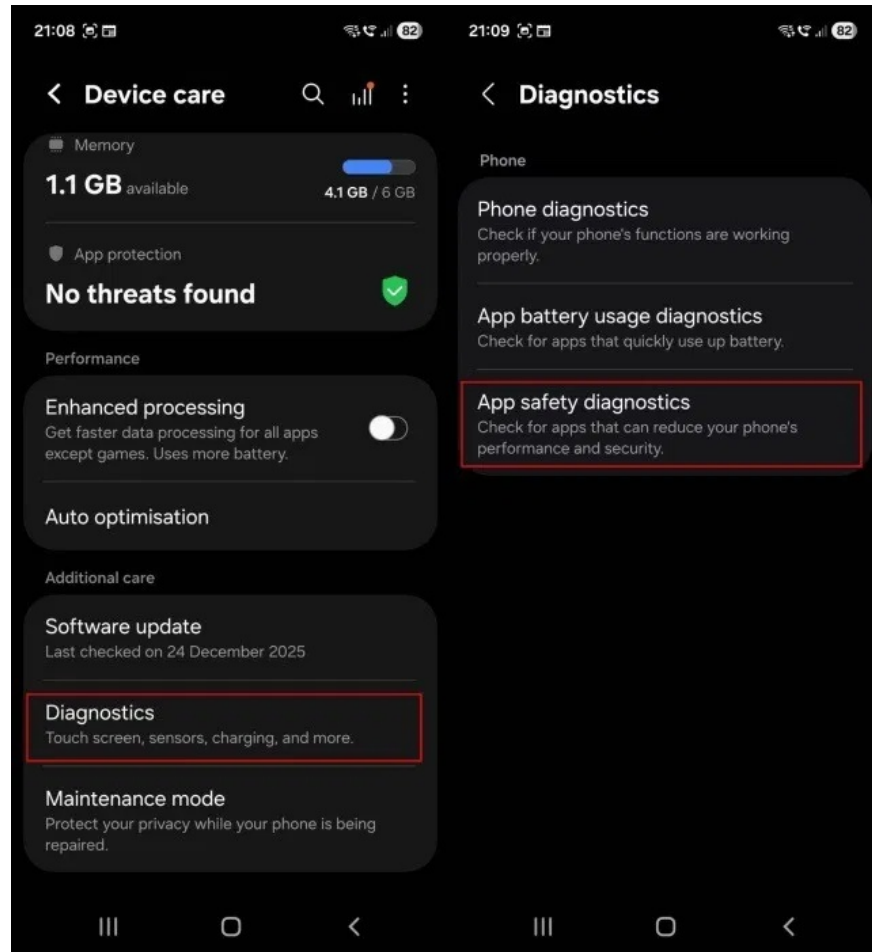


1 issue needs your attention

-  No high battery usage detected 
-  No app crashes detected 
-  No apps using too much memory 
-  No malware apps detected 
-  1 app is sending excessive alerts or ads 
-  No storage issues 



At the same time, you can navigate to **Diagnostics** in **Device Care** and check if Samsung has found any security issues with the apps on your phone.



If you own a Motorola phone, these devices come with the Moto Secure software suite, designed to protect and optimize your phone.

Use specialized online scanning tools.

While useful, Google Play Protect isn't completely secure and can still let in a malicious app. For enhanced security, you can also use online scanning tools to verify your APK files.

VirusTotal

VirusTotal is an online tool that analyzes your APK files and helps detect all possible viruses and malware. The service is very easy to use: Simply upload your files to ensure they are error-free. Alternatively, you can copy and paste the URL into VirusTotal or use the search function to check the IP address, domain, or file hash. VirusTotal will then run the file through various security providers.

[Join our Community](#) and enjoy additional community insights and crowdsourced detections, plus an API key to [automate checks](#).

Security vendors' analysis














Do you want to automate checks?

Acronis (Static ML)	✓	Undetected
AhnLab-V3	✓	Undetected
Alibaba	✓	Undetected
AliCloud	✓	Undetected
ALYac	✓	Undetected
Antiy-AVL	✓	Undetected
Arcabit	✓	Undetected
Avast	✓	Undetected
Avast-Mobile	✓	Undetected
AVG	✓	Undetected
Avira (no cloud)	✓	Undetected
Baidu	✓	Undetected
BitDefender	✓	Undetected
ClamAV	✓	Undetected
CMC	✓	Undetected

VirusTotal is also available as a mobile app, which can scan installed apps on your device, as well as individual files (in testing, this option didn't work) and links. You can download it for free from the Google Play Store.

User Apps

System Apps

-   ...llamalab.automate.ext.network
Detected: 0 Total: 76
-   **Avast Mobile Security**
...m.avast.android.mobilesecurity
Detected: 0 Total: 75
-   **BBC**
bbc.mobile.news.ww
Detected: 0 Total: 77
-   **Bandcamp**
com.bandcamp.android
Detected: 0 Total: 77
-   **Bolt**
ee.mtakso.client
Detected: 0 Total: 76
-   **Booking.com**
com.booking 
Detected: 0 Total: 75



Internxt

Another option is Internxt, which allows you to drag and drop files up to 1GB in size for scanning.

Virus Scanner

Drag and drop suspicious files to detect malware and other breaches for free.

Scan any document, image, pdf, or other file types. Keep your files safe and free from viruses before you open them with Internxt's zero-knowledge Virus Scanner.

✔ No virus detected for this file

Keep your files safe from virus

Internxt has partnered with Bitdefender to offer you ultimate real time protection on your device. Claim 3 months of ultimate antivirus



Powered by BitDefender, their scanning process will quickly tell you whether a file is clean or infected with a virus.

Install antivirus software.

If you frequently install APKs on your phone, you should download a mobile antivirus app. This will also help protect your device from other threats.

You should use Malwarebytes, an application that has successfully removed malware from people's devices many times before. Other options worth mentioning are BitDefender and Norton360 .

Even if you're taking steps to ensure the APK files you want to install on your phone are safe, some malware, such as Brokewell, can silently install malicious APK files onto your device without your knowledge.

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