

Apple Watch gets blood sugar, temperature sensors in yet another Big Tech wearables push

Article

Apple is planning new and improved features for its Series 7 Apple Watch, slated for release in 2022: The updated watch will include faster performance, a body temperature sensor, and a

blood sugar sensor, [according to](#) Bloomberg.

For context, in September 2020, Apple [released](#) its Series 6 Watch with enhanced health tracking features like blood oxygen saturation (SpO2) monitoring, better sleep tracking, a faster FDA-approved electrocardiogram (EKG) sensor, and upgraded heart health monitoring. The Watch is being leveraged in a slew of [clinical studies](#) for [COVID-19 detection](#), heart failure, and asthma.

Apple went from laggard to leader in the smartwatch industry in less than a decade. Its recent focus on [fortifying](#) user privacy will work in its favor to secure an even larger share of the growing pool of smartwatch users: **39%** of consumers [indicate](#) the top way to rebuild their trust in a company's tech is to be transparent about whether or how their data is shared.

Its latest smartwatch development is another drop in the growing pool of Big Tech wearable developments:

- **Facebook** is reportedly dishing out **\$1 billion** to [develop](#) its own wearable, which will likely include a heart rate monitor and detachable display with standalone LTE connectivity—a key differentiator among its smartwatch rivals.
- Earlier this month, **Amazon's Halo** wearable [unveiled](#) functionality that measures movement using a smartphone camera and cloud-based AI, adding onto its [unique](#) health tracking features that that measure body fat percentage and tone of voice.
- And [Google](#) is trudging deeper into wearables with a unified wearables platform in partnership with **Samsung**, which should allow for **30%** faster app startup times, improved user interfaces, and customizable features. This was big news, considering Samsung is one of the largest providers of wearables globally, accounting for **9%** of total wearable shipments worldwide—far higher than now Google-owned **Fitbit's 2.9%**, per IDC.

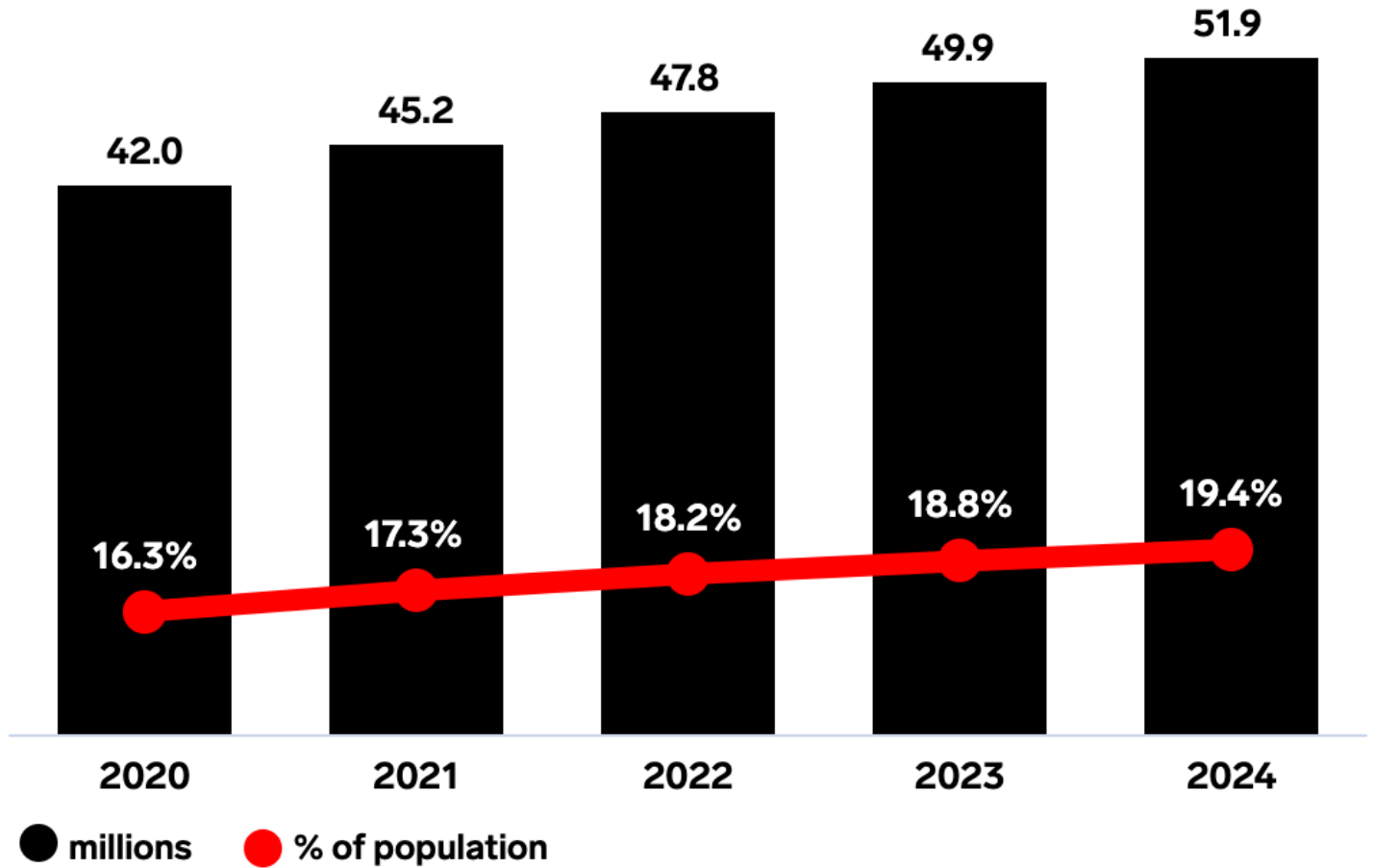
It's no surprise Big Tech is gunning for the wearables space considering the growing market opportunity, especially on the back of the pandemic: 54% of US adults used a wearable to track at least one health metric in 2020—up 10 percentage points from 2019, [per](#) Rock Health's 2020 Digital Health Consumer Adoption report. Moreover, **46%** of respondents said they started using wearables for a new purpose during the pandemic, including managing a diagnosed health condition (**66%**), fitness tracking (**34%**), and improving physical activity (**32%**). This is significant considering Big Tech companies like Apple and Amazon are not only rolling out more advanced wearables, but also digital fitness programs.

Consumers' growing interest in wearables gives Big Tech cos an avenue to bring people over to their other digital health endeavors—like remote patient monitoring (RPM) solutions, virtual care, and reproductive health apps.

- For example, **21%** of US adults already use a smartwatch, and consumer interest is **growing**—and this is coinciding with an increase in RPM tech users: **We expect** there to be over **30 million RPM users** by 2024, up from **23.4 million** in 2020.
- Consumers may be more likely to try an RPM or virtual care solution if it integrates a device they're already using. And advanced sensors, like ones that measure body temperature and blood sugar, could be especially useful in digitally managing a patient's health: For example, body temperature readings could be used to enhance telehealth appointments and virtual diagnoses, monitor a patient's health as part of an RPM-enabled home care solution, and to supplement fertility tracking apps.

Smartwatch Users

US, 2020-2024



Source: eMarketer, September 2020

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