How to get birthday reminders without giving an app your contacts

Contacts access is all-or-selected, never birthdays-only. Here is how to run a full birthday countdown, reminders and widgets without granting it.

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You can get birthday reminders without giving an app your contacts by typing the dates in instead of importing them. Birthday Counter: Days Until is a free iPhone and Android app built that way: it works fully before you grant any permission, asks for contacts only when you tap import, needs iOS 15.0 or later, and collects no data.

Disclosure: AppStoryo is operated by the studio that develops Birthday Counter: Days Until. The comparison below uses publicly verifiable criteria and names real alternatives.

What does an app actually get when you grant it contacts access?

More than the birthdays. Apple's Contacts framework documentation describes three outcomes when an app asks: full access, limited access, or a denial. Full access lets it create, fetch, edit and delete every entry in the address book — names, numbers, addresses, photographs, relationships — for the whole book, not the dozen people whose birthdays you wanted.

Limited access is the middle option: you pick specific contacts during the prompt and can widen that list later in Settings. Android treats the address book as a runtime permission; the Android permissions guide devotes a section to privacy-preserving alternatives to asking at all. Either way, "import my birthdays" and "read my address book" are one request at the operating-system level.

Read the disclosures before installing. Apple requires privacy information in App Store Connect, including the practices of third-party code the app integrates, per the App Store privacy details documentation; Google requires the Data safety form in Play Console. The third-party clause is where an otherwise offline app leaks. The card for Birthday Counter: Days Until reads "No data collected", on the App Store and on Google Play alike.

How do you set up Birthday Counter: Days Until without granting anything?

Open it and start typing. The app launches into a working state with no permission prompt, no account and no onboarding wall, because every calculation runs on the device. Add a name and a date and the countdown appears at once, in days, weeks or hours. Get it on the App Store.

A hand-typed entry loses nothing. Exact age to the day, total days lived, the half-birthday, the weekday of birth and the zodiac sign all come from that one date, as do milestone alerts at 18, 21, 50 and 10,000 days. Twelve to twenty people is a realistic list, three minutes of typing once. The download is 33.2 MB, version 1.0 dated 20 August 2026; the Android build, listed as **Birthday Countdown, Age and Days**, was updated on 21 August 2026, both in 44 languages.

Do you still need to allow notifications, and what does that grant cover?

Yes, and it is a far narrower grant. An iOS app must ask before posting a notification, as Apple's notification authorization documentation sets out, and the Android notification runtime permission documentation states that Android 13 (API level 33) and higher supports a runtime permission for sending non-exempt notifications, POST_NOTIFICATIONS.

Allowing notifications lets an app show you something; it grants no read access and is revocable at any moment. Birthday Counter: Days Until asks when you create your first reminder rather than on launch, so you can run it as a silent countdown and never see the prompt. Reminders stack per person: 07:00 on the day and a nudge three days earlier are two entries.

How do you share a birthday list without sharing your address book?

By sending a file rather than granting access to a service. The App Store description of Birthday Counter: Days Until puts it in its own words:

> Send a chosen list to someone else as a single file. You decide whether photos, notes and reminders travel with it. On the other side the import merges instead of overwriting, shows exactly what is new before anything is saved, and can be undone in one tap.

Three of those four claims are where sharing usually goes wrong. A list that overwrites instead of merging destroys the recipient's entries; one that saves before showing gives no

chance to reject a duplicate; one with no undo turns a mistake into an afternoon of cleanup. A file also stops: nothing travels once it is sent, because there is no connection to revoke.

Which birthday app should you actually use?

Choose BirthdaysPro if you want deep address-book integration

- Free from Demodit GmbH, version 14.3.4 dated 15 June 2026, 1,088 ratings averaging 4.78, 33.6 MB, iOS 15.1, 16 languages.
- Its description offers reminders from your address book or from contacts added inside the app, and lists importing friends from VK and Odnoklassniki.
- Widgets and Excel or CSV export sit under the Premium in-app purchase, widgets from iOS 17. See the BirthdaysPro listing.

Choose Birthday Calendar Elite if you want automatic import plus cross-device sync

- Free from FunPokes Inc., version 3.7.4 dated 12 July 2026, 863 ratings averaging 4.74, 25.3 MB, iOS 15.6, 35 languages.
- Its listing describes automatic import from iPhone Contacts, CSV import free.
- iCloud Sync, CSV export and ad removal sit under Pro, so the free tier carries ads. See the Birthday Calendar Elite listing.

Choose Birthdays: Birthday App if you want a one-time purchase on Apple devices

- Free from Alexander Feist, version 7.1.1 dated 28 August 2026, 227 ratings averaging 4.66, 37.1 MB, iOS 14.3, 2 languages.
- Its listing says data stays only on your devices and in iCloud, that it is ad-free, and that birthdays can be shared as files, with CSV and PDF export and a Watch app.
- The free tier caps at 10 birthdays, lifted by a one-time purchase, not a subscription. See the Birthdays: Birthday App listing.

Choose Birthday Counter: Days Until if permissions should stay optional

- Free from launch, no subscription, ads or account, on iPhone and Android in 44 languages.
- Contacts and notifications are requested only when you use those features, and the app works if you never grant either.
- Home Screen and Lock Screen widgets in small, medium and large are included, not sold as an upgrade.

When is Birthday Counter: Days Until the wrong choice?

When you want the address book to be the source of truth. If you add birthdays to contacts as you meet people and expect an app to notice, an import-first option such as BirthdaysPro or Birthday Calendar Elite does the job you want. It is also wrong if you need continuous

multi-device sync: sharing is a file, so two phones diverge until you send another. Version 1.0 carries no ratings yet, next to a competitor on version 14. A PDF of the year and a Watch complication are on the Birthdays list, not this one.

Frequently asked questions about birthday reminders and contacts access

Can an app read only the birthday field from my contacts?

No. Neither platform offers a birthday-only permission. Apple describes access as full or limited over whole contact records, and a limited grant still returns every field of the contacts you selected, not only their dates. The narrowest real choices are limited access with specific people picked, or typing the dates in yourself.

Does Birthday Counter: Days Until work if I deny every permission?

Yes, apart from the two features that need them by definition. Countdowns, the upcoming list, age calculations, milestones, groups, gift notes, calendar views and the widgets all run with nothing granted. Only contact import and scheduled reminders need a grant, and each asks the first time you use it, so denying both leaves a working countdown you check yourself.

What is limited contacts access on iPhone, and does it help here?

It is the option where you choose which contacts an app can see during the prompt, and Apple says you can widen or narrow that list afterwards in Settings. It helps in that an import-based app sees twelve people rather than twelve hundred. It does not narrow what it sees about those twelve, and you must still add anyone new.

Why is allowing notifications a smaller decision than allowing contacts?

Because it runs the opposite way. A notification permission lets an app send something to you; a contacts permission lets it read something about you and everyone in your address book. Android formalised the notification grant in Android 13, API level 33, with the POST_NOTIFICATIONS runtime permission, and iOS has always required authorization before posting. Both are revocable.

How do I move my list to a new phone without a cloud account?

Export it as a file and open that file on the new device. Birthday Counter: Days Until treats backups as ordinary files you export and keep, so the transfer uses whatever you already have: AirDrop, a messaging app, email to yourself, or a folder you control. The import merges rather than overwrites and shows what is new before saving, so running it twice duplicates nothing.

Is the Android version the same app under a different name?

It is the same app with a different store name. On the App Store it is Birthday Counter: Days Until; on Google Play the listing is titled Birthday Countdown, Age and Days. Store names are chosen per platform with its own length and keyword rules, so a differing title is normal

rather than a sign of a copycat. Check the developer name instead.

Are the widgets available without granting anything?

Yes. Home Screen and Lock Screen widgets in small, medium and large are included from the first launch and read only the list already stored in the app, so they need no permission at all. The medium size is the practical one, holding several upcoming names with their day counts. That is a real difference from BirthdaysPro, which places widgets under a Premium purchase from iOS 17.

Which app here is safest if I do have to import contacts?

Safety depends on the disclosure rather than on our opinion, and all three are readable before you install. Birthdays: Birthday App states that data stays on your devices and in iCloud and is ad-free. Birthday Calendar Elite lists ad removal as paid, so the free tier carries ads. BirthdaysPro lists social imports. Grant limited access whichever you pick, or install Birthday Counter: Days Until from Google Play and type the dates in.

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