

Amazon Echo User Guide:

Social Communication



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Introduction

As we transition into older age, it is critical that we remain as socially connected as possible to our friends and family. Social engagement can help us remain happy and healthy. Sometimes, however, life circumstances can make it difficult to spend time with our loved ones. This is where technology such as smart phones and digital home assistants can play a vital role in keeping us socially engaged and connected as we age.

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic we all learned how important it was that we stay connected to our loved ones, especially when we cannot physically be together. During times like this, we can still find ways to stay meaningfully engaged with others virtually, and your digital home assistant can help!

Imagine Susan, 72, who lives in an assisted living community. She uses a wheelchair and experiences some difficulty moving around on her own so traveling to see her friends and family can be a burden. Because of this, it has been especially challenging for Susan to stay in touch with her family and friends.



With voice-activated digital home assistants such as Amazon Alexa, Susan jonly needs to say a simple phrase like (i.e., “Alexa, call...”) to dial up her loved ones like her daughter, Lucy. By saying “*Alexa, call Lucy,*” Susan can engage the digital home assistant hands-free from across the room. Within moments, her daughter’s face appears on the screen even though she lives across the country. It has never been this easy to see her loved ones’ faces. Susan’s family can also use Alexa’s communication features to check up on her at home whenever they would like. These are just some of the ways that Susan and her family can utilize this technology to stay connected.

Getting Started

By connecting your smartphone's contacts to the Amazon Alexa App, you can use your Echo Show device to contact others. This guide will provide the basic steps for using your Echo Show to call telephone numbers as well as communicate with other Alexa-enabled devices. In addition, the guide provides support for how to use other similar communication features and voice commands.

Please keep in mind that software updates can make your screen appear slightly different than the images in this guide, but the instructions for how to make a call should remain nearly the same despite these changes.

Take Note:

When you choose to sync your smartphone's address book (i.e., the phone numbers and other information of your friends, family, and acquaintances stored on your phone), you are consenting to share that information with Amazon to make contacting these individuals easier. Although this information is safe with Amazon, there may be personal privacy considerations related to sharing this information. Remember, it is entirely your choice to share these things. To learn more about your privacy rights, please refer to the "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)" section found at the end of this guide.

Before you Begin...

Note: This user guide assumes you have set-up your Amazon Echo, are connected to a stable internet connection, and have downloaded the Amazon Alexa app to your smartphone. **Please refer to “Setting up the Amazon Echo” user guide if your device is not set up, available at: <https://techsage.gatech.edu/resources/tools>**

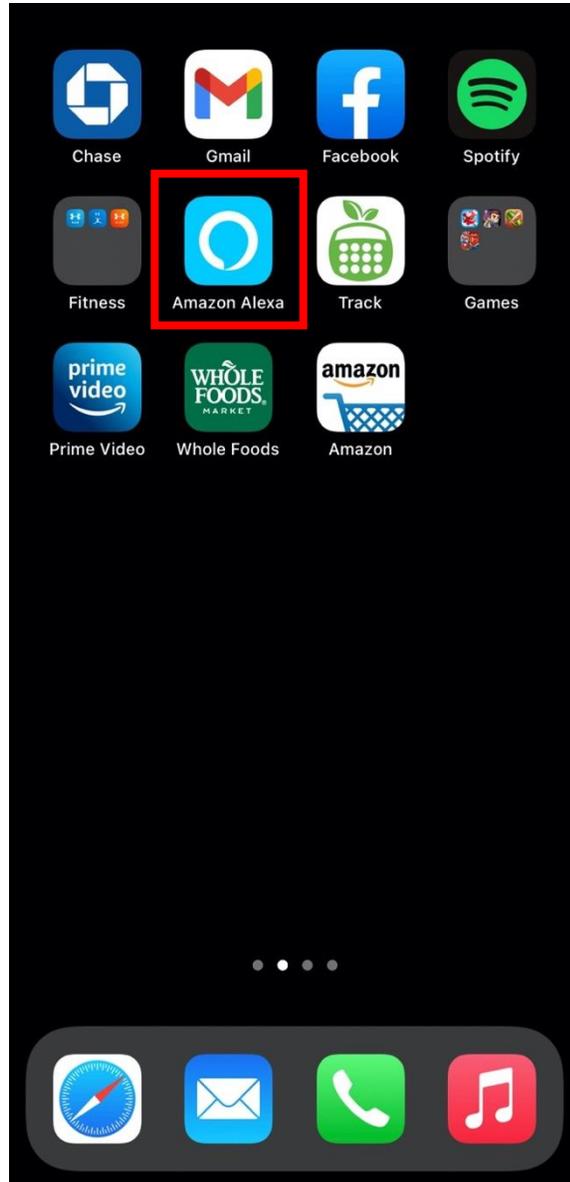
You will need your email and password, as well as a smartphone, to set up and use Alexa to Call.

Adding Contacts to the Amazon Alexa App

Step 1

of 5

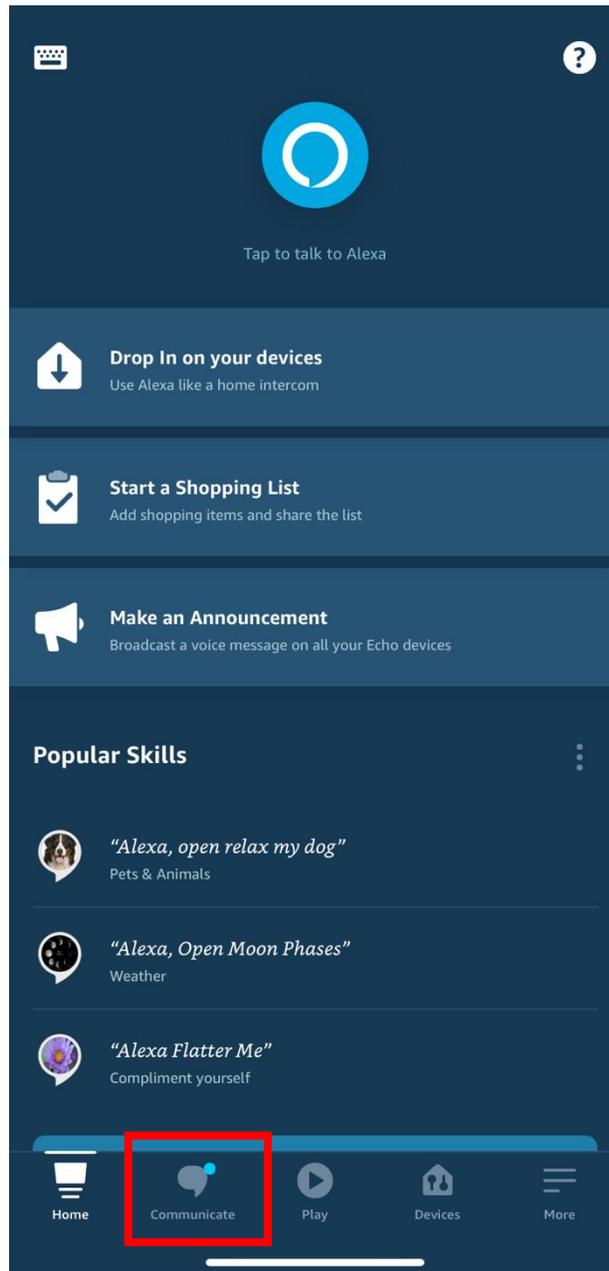
To make calls on the Echo Show, you will need to add your contacts from your smartphone. The first step is to find the Alexa app on your smartphone. Once you locate the Alexa app (outlined in red), tap on it with your finger.



Step 2

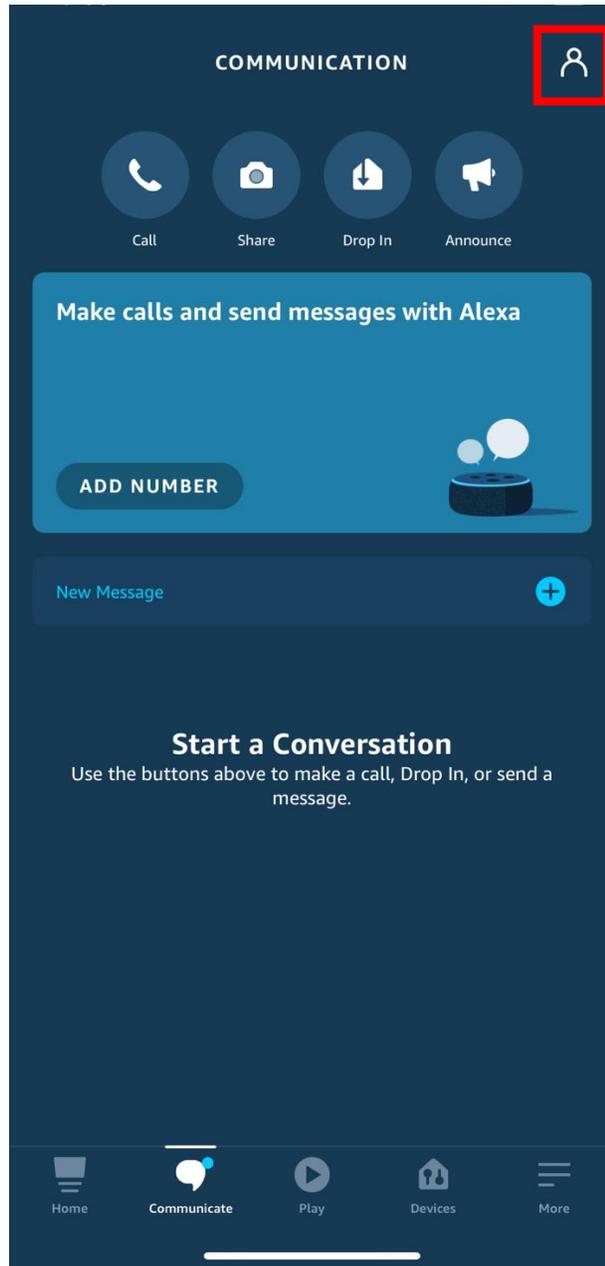
of 5

After opening the Amazon Alexa App, your home screen should look like the picture below. Tap on the “Communicate” bottom tab (outlined in red) to navigate to the Communication page where you can add your contacts.



Step 3
of 5

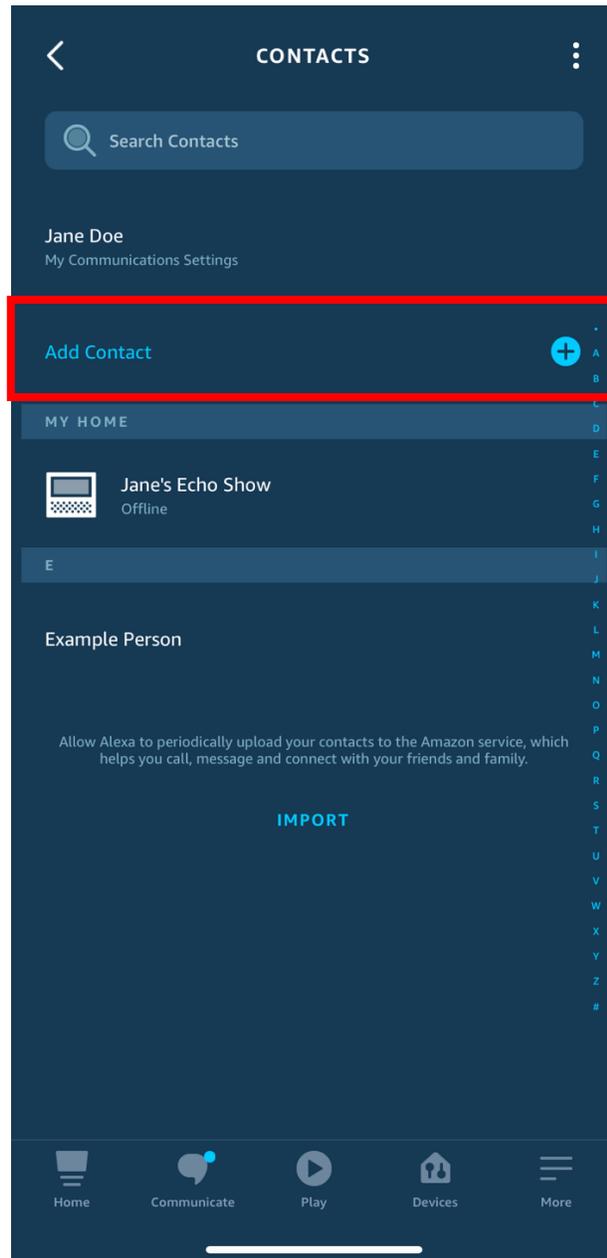
You should now be on the Communication page of the Amazon Alexa App. Your screen should reflect the picture below. To begin adding your contacts, tap on the figure icon (outlined in red).



Step 4

of 5

Now, you can begin to add your mobile phone contacts to the Amazon Alexa app. This will allow you to call those contacts directly from your Echo Show device. The first way to add a contact is to tap on “Add Contact” (outlined in red).



Step 5

of 5



Your screen should now look similar to the picture below. To add a contact, you must enter at least a first name, last name, and mobile phone number (shown by red arrows). Tap on each box to type in the information.

You also have the option to add in a nickname and relationship to the contact (shown by gold arrows). This allows you to refer to the same contact by more than one name.

Once you are finished typing in the information, tap on “Save” (outlined in green) in the top right corner of your screen to exit. You have now added a contact.

< ADD CONTACT Save

To create this contact on Alexa, enter a name and phone number. Tap fields below to enter.

First Name

Last Name

Alexa understands nicknames. Add a nickname to make calling & messaging even easier.

Nickname

Relationship

Mobile Phone

+1 Mobile Phone

Add Phone Number

Home Communicate Play Devices More

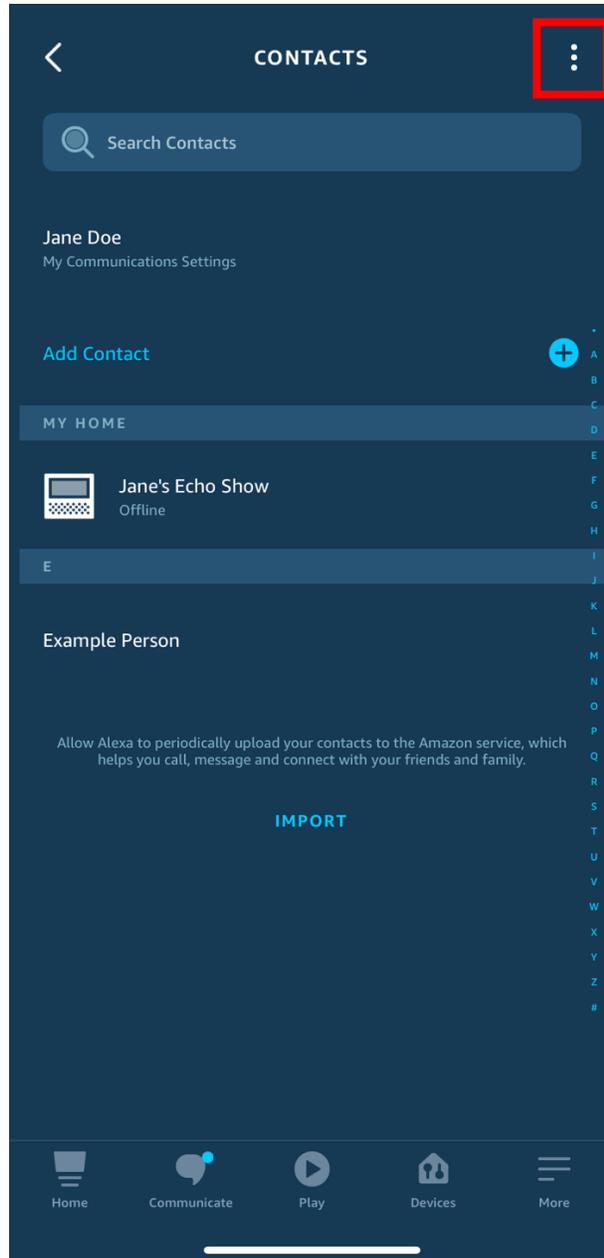
Adding Contacts to the Amazon Alexa App (Alternative Method)

Step 1

of 2

After adding a contact and pressing save, you will be brought back to the “Contacts” screen as shown below.

Another way to add a contact is to do so from the “Manage Contacts” page. To navigate to this page, tap on the three vertical dots at the top right corner of the Contacts screen (**outlined in red**).

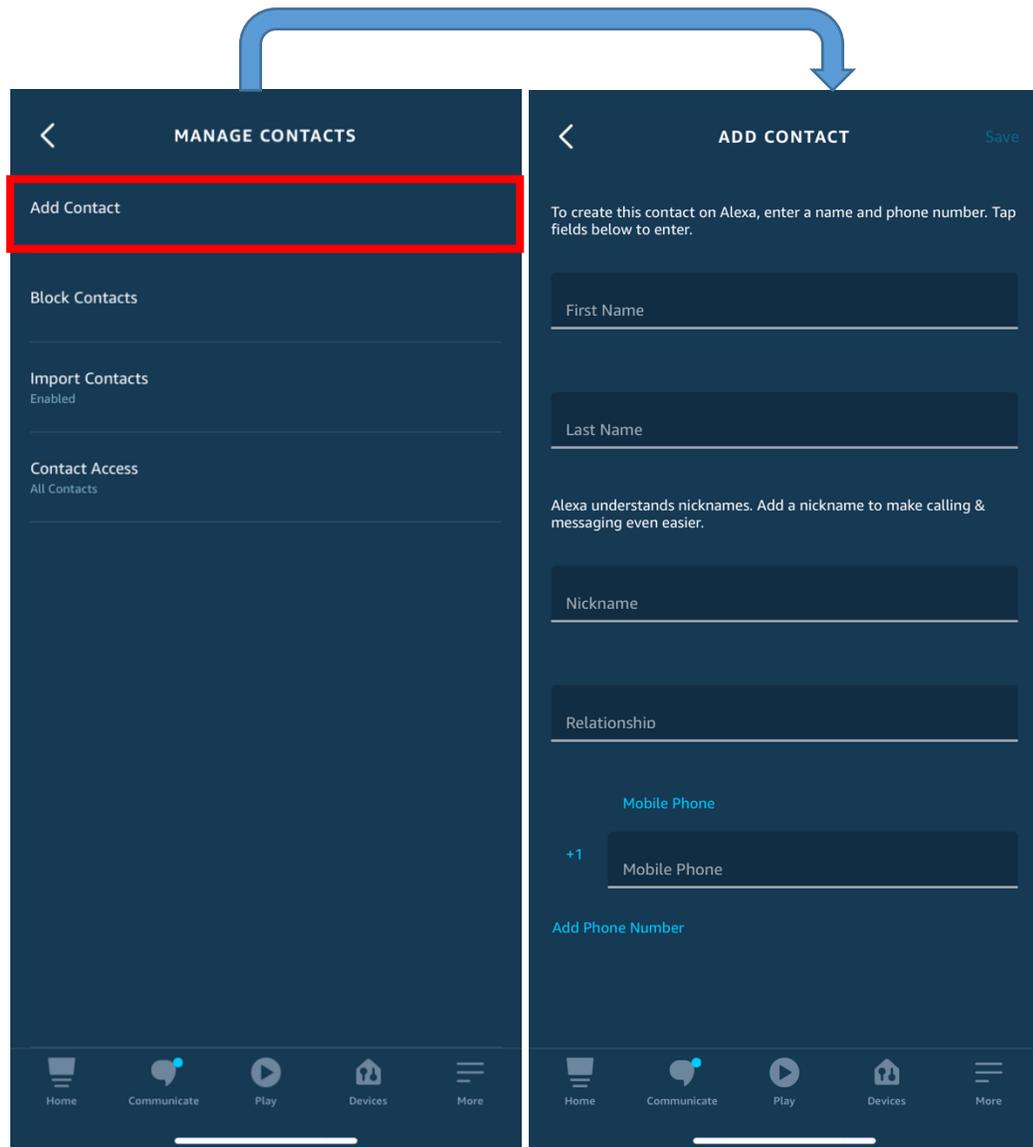


Step 2

of 2

You should now be on the “Manage Contacts” page as shown on the screen on the left.

Tap “Add Contact” (outlined in red) to bring you to the screen shown on the right. Here you can also enter in the information and add a contact the same way as shown earlier.

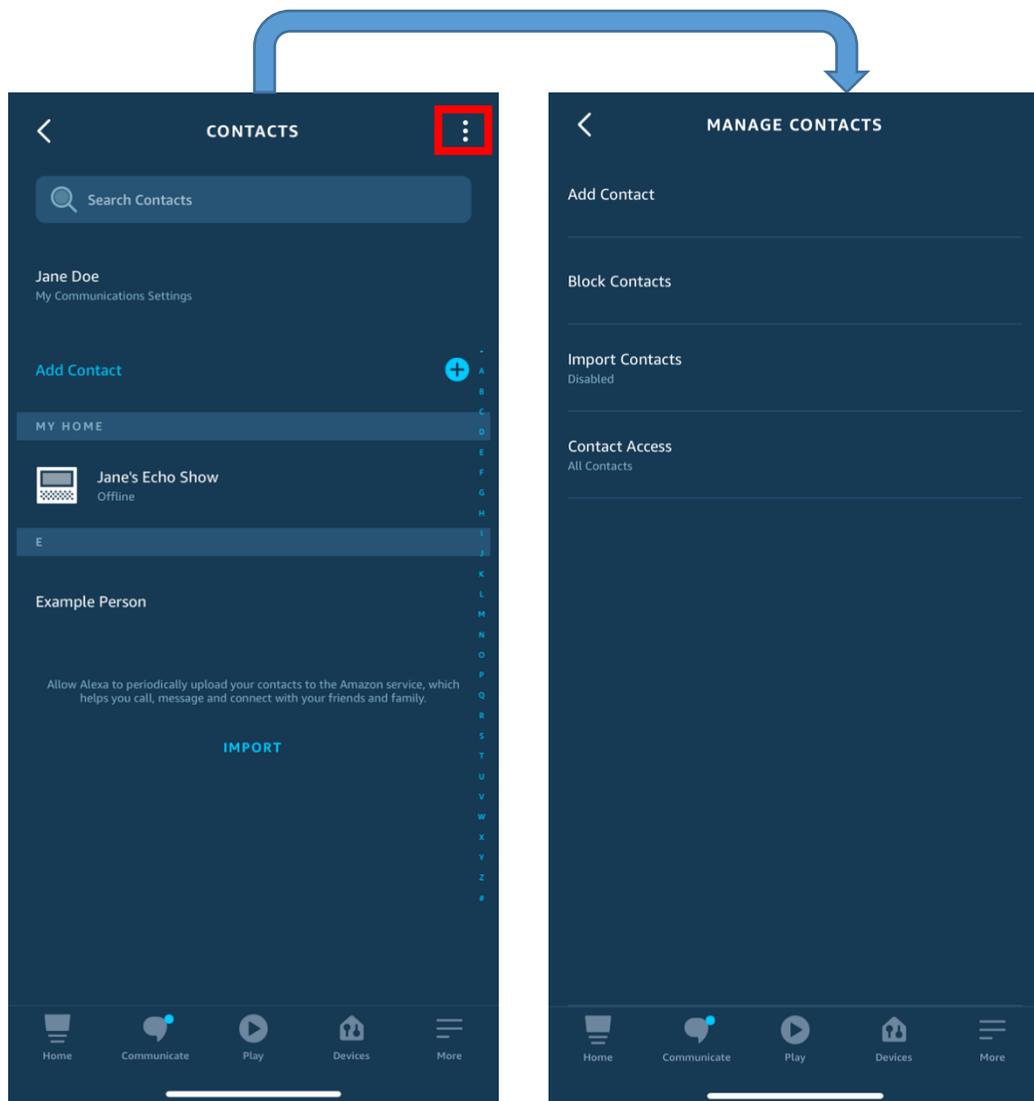


Automatically Importing your Smartphone Contacts into the Amazon Alexa App

Step 1 of 2

By this point, you should be able to add in individual contacts to the Amazon Alexa App. However, the easiest way to utilize your existing smartphone contacts is to import them into the Alexa app. This is also known as ‘syncing your contacts.’

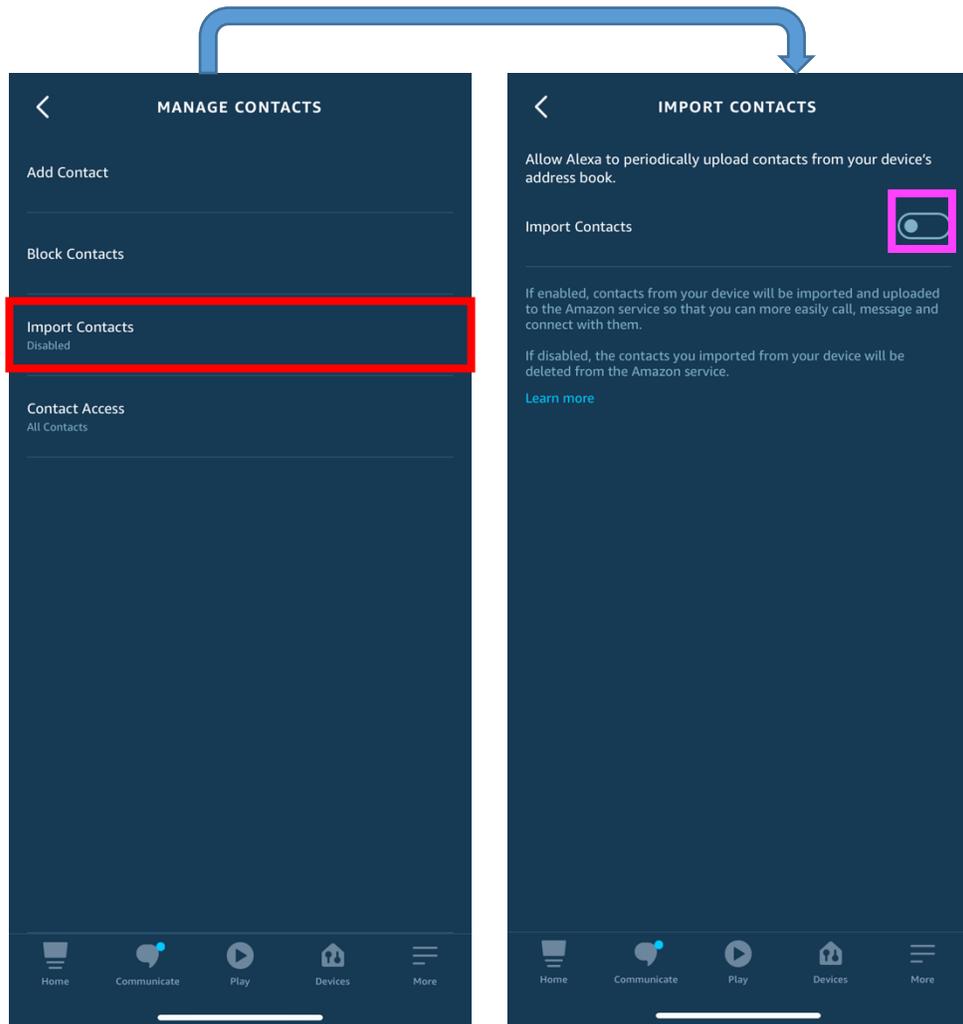
To import your smartphone contacts, you will need to navigate back to the “Manage Contacts” page. Tap on the three vertical dots (outlined in red) in the top right corner of the “Contacts” page to bring you to the screen on the right.



Step 2
of 2

Now, you will need to enable contact importing. To do this, tap on “Import Contacts” (outlined in red). This will bring you to the screen shown on the right.

To import your smartphone contacts into the Amazon Alexa app, tap on the slider to enable the feature (outlined in pink). Depending on the size of your contact list and the speed of your internet, this step may take several minutes. The screen will return to the “Manage Contacts” page once this is finished. You should now be able to call any mobile number from your Echo Show device.



Using Alexa to Call on the Echo Show

You should now be ready to use your Echo Show for calling! Now that your Echo Show device knows the names of your contacts from your smartphone Amazon Alexa app, you can use both your phone and Echo Show Device to call other mobile phones and Amazon Echo devices.

If you follow this guide, you should be able to complete a call from your device for the first time in just a few short steps and less than 15 minutes.

The first pair of features, *Echo-to-Phone Calling* & *Echo-to-Alexa Calling*, will allow you to make both telephone and video calls from your Echo Show device. The instructions contain steps for how to make calls both physically by using the screen and by using simple voice commands.

The second feature, *Alexa Drop-In*, will allow you to check in on select contacts and instantly connect from their Alexa-enabled device to their home.



Responding to Calls on your Echo Show with Voice Commands

Before you learn how to call others from your Echo Show device, you should first also know how to use voice commands to respond to incoming calls. Take some time to familiarize yourself with these two voice commands.

If you wish to accept the incoming call, try saying,

“Alexa, answer the call.”



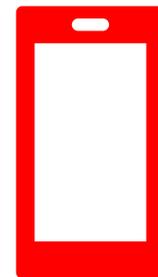
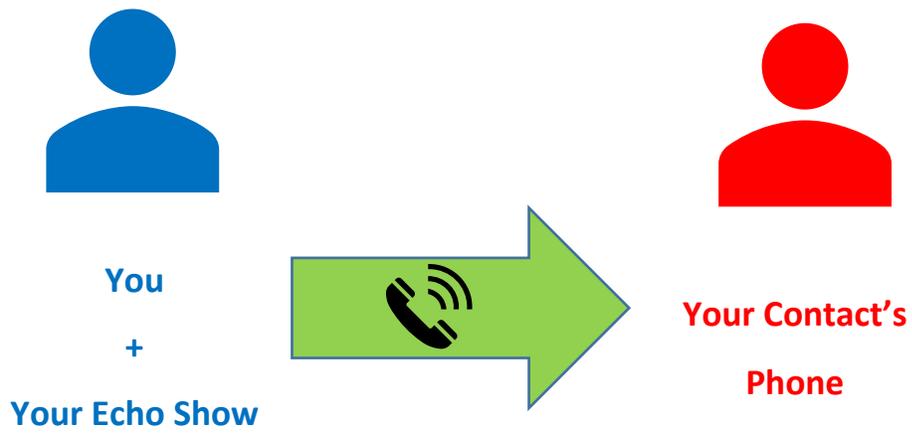
If you do not wish to accept the incoming call, try saying,

“Alexa, reject the call.”



Feature 1.1: Echo-to-Phone Calling

You can use your Echo Show device to call phone numbers in the U.S., Mexico, Canada, and the U.K. Exceptions include emergency numbers such as 911 and toll numbers.



*(This can be either a
landline OR cellphone)*

Feature 1.2: Echo-to-Alexa Calling

You can use your Echo Show device to call other Amazon Alexa-enabled devices, such as the Amazon Echo Show or Amazon Echo Dot Speaker. Once your contact has connected their Alexa-enabled device to their phone via the Amazon Alexa app, you can call any of their connected devices.



Echo-to-Phone Calling & Echo-to-Alexa Calling Steps

Step 1

of 6

To make a call from your Echo Show, you will need to select a contact to call. The first step will be to navigate to the Communications menu. When you first turn on your device, your home screen should be similar to the photo below. You will notice a small white cursor on the right center edge of the screen (**outlined in red**). Swipe this cursor to the left to open the Communications menu.



Step 2
of 6

Your screen should now display the menu shown below. Tap on “Communicate” (outlined in green) to reveal the communications menu.

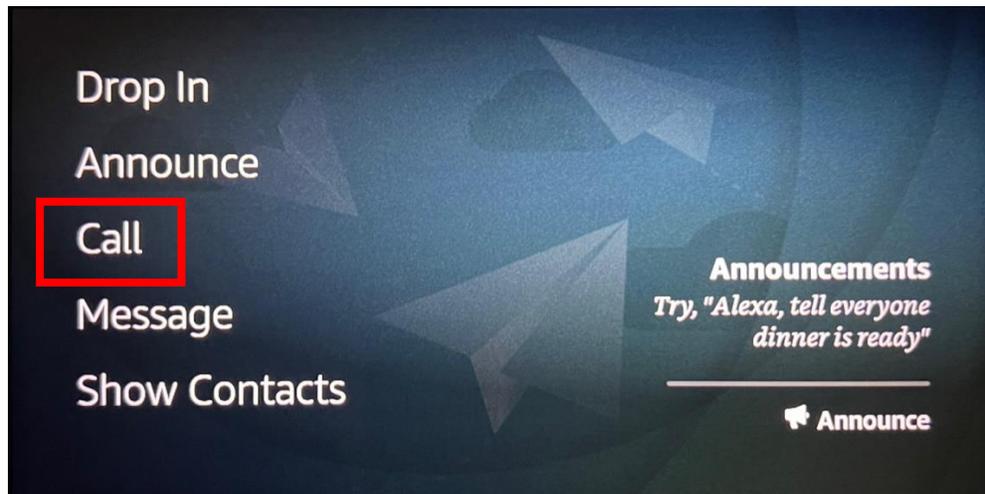


Step 3

of 6



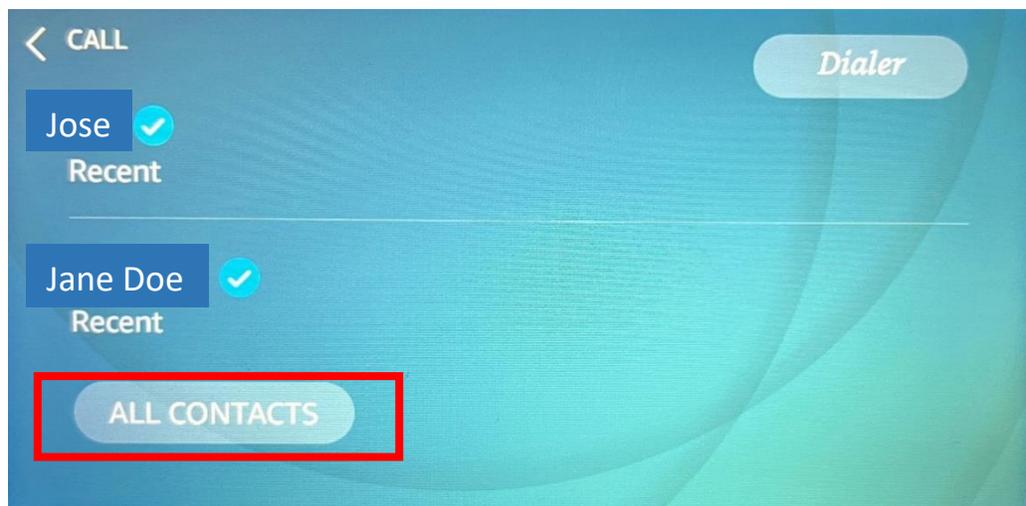
You will now see the menu of communication options. To call a contact, tap on “Call” (outlined in red) to open your list of contacts.



Step 4
of 6

Now, your screen should look similar to the photo shown below. If you have recently called the contact from your device, they will appear in your list of “Recent” at the top.

To choose a different contact, tap on “All Contacts” (outlined in red) at the bottom of the screen and scroll down to find your contact. Once you have found the contact you wish to call, tap on their name.



Step 5

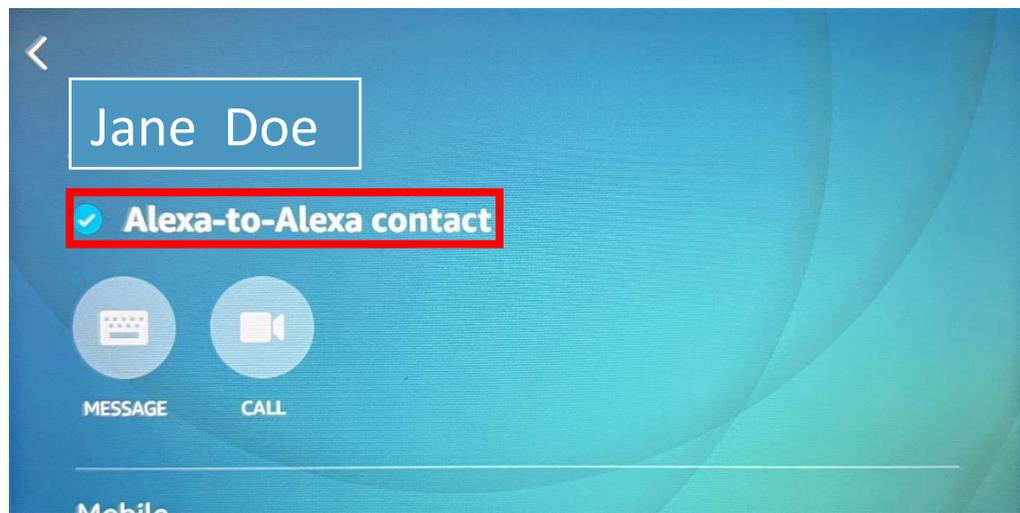
of 6



Now that you have selected the name of the contact that you wish to call, your screen will look like the photo shown below.

You will notice that for contacts who have connected an Alexa-enabled device to their mobile phone number, “Alexa-to-Alexa contact” will appear listed under their name next to a blue checkmark (outlined in red). This means that when you call the contact, both their mobile cell phone and Alexa-enabled device will ring. It is up to the other person to decide which device to answer from.

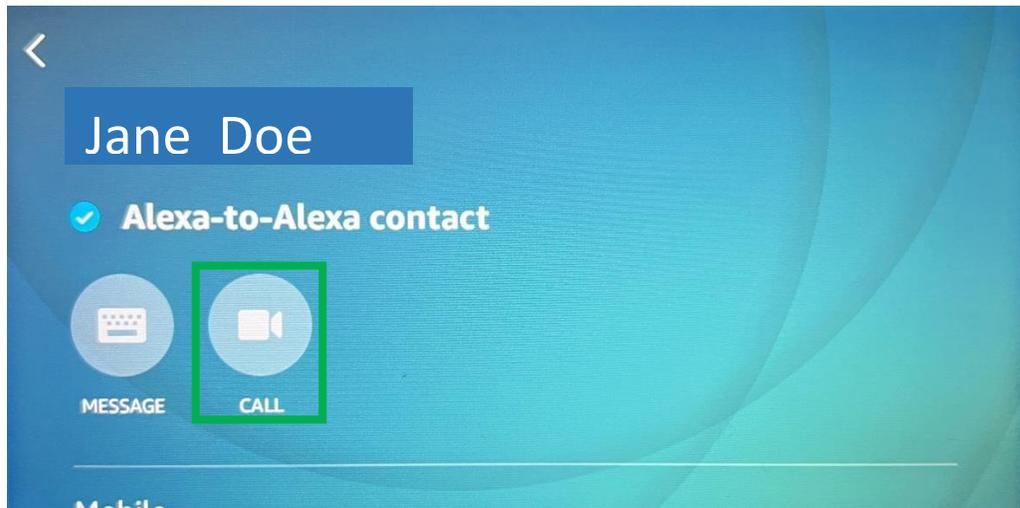
If the contact does not have the blue checkmark and “Alexa-to-Alexa contact” listed under their name, you will only be able to dial their mobile cell phone.



Step 6
of 6

You are now ready to make a call. Tap “Call” (outlined in green) to dial your contact.

A shortcut to calling contacts from your screen is to instead use voice commands. To call the name of a contact in your list, try saying, “Alexa, call (name of contact)” to dial.



Feature 2: Alexa Drop-In

Using Alexa’s “Drop-In” feature also allows you to communicate between your Echo Show and other Alexa-enabled devices. The difference is that you do not need to wait for the other person to answer the call!

First, you will need to request permission from your contact with an Alexa-enabled device. Once you both have enabled permissions on your devices, you will now be able to connect to the microphone of your contact’s device to speak out a message at any time. Additionally, you can use this feature to check up on loved ones if they have enabled camera access as well.

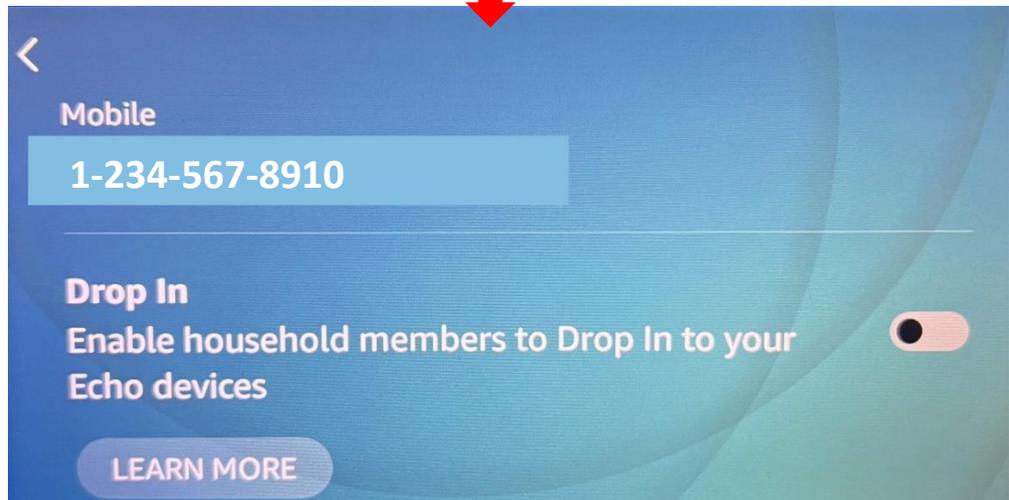
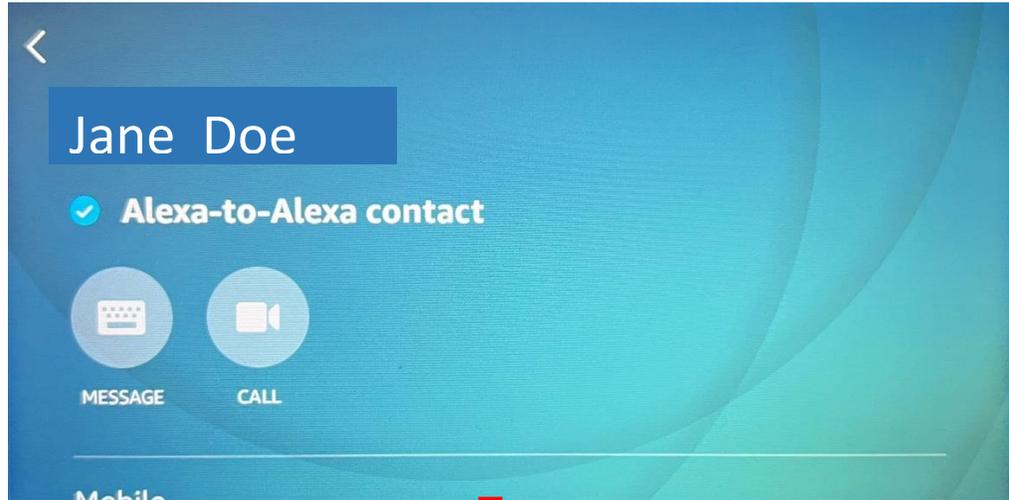


Alexa Drop-In Steps

Step 1

of 4

To drop-in on a contact, both of you will need to enable permissions. Start by navigating to a contact name the same way you would if you were trying to make a call. Scroll to the bottom half of the contact page until your screen looks like the photo below.



Step 2

of 4

Now, tap on the Drop In slider to enable permissions for this contact (outlined in red).

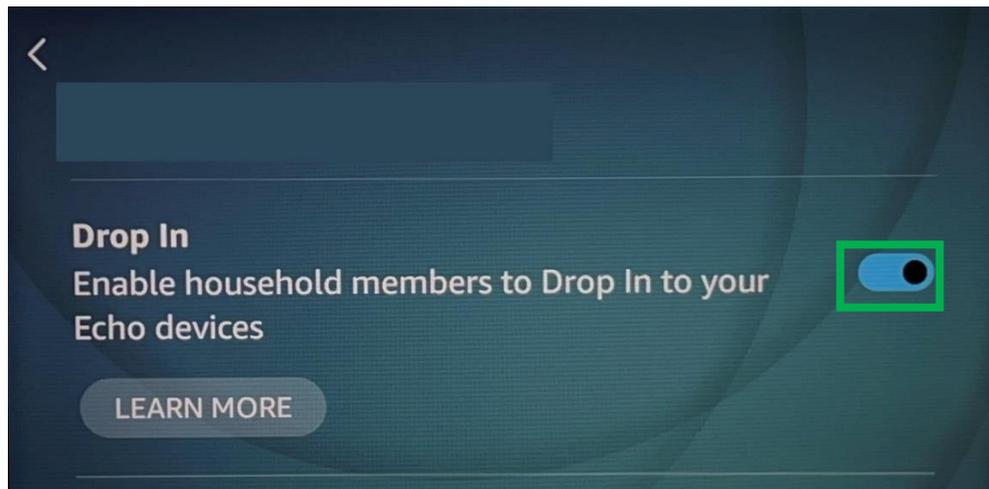
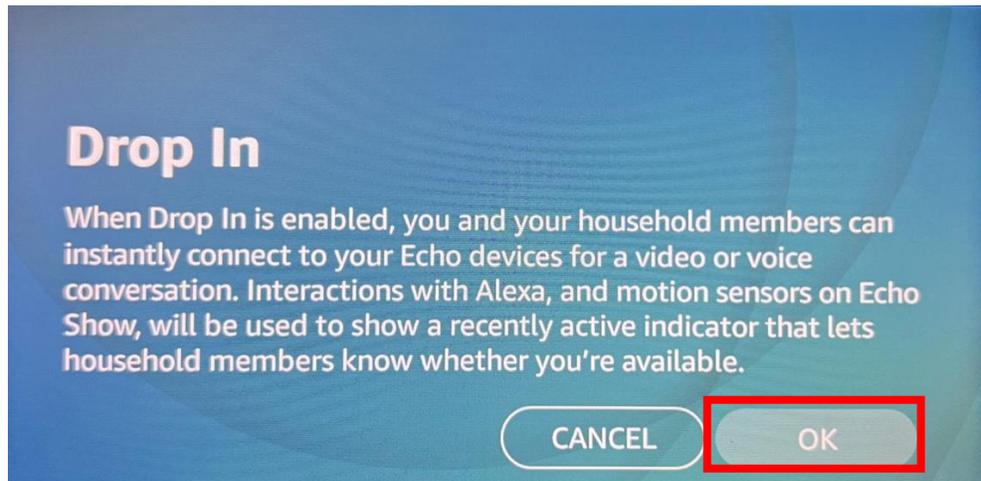


Step 3

of 4

After tapping on the Drop In slider, you will receive a message explaining the feature (shown below). Once you have read it, tap "OK" (outlined in red).

The slider should now appear to be turned on such as in the photo shown on the bottom (outlined in green).

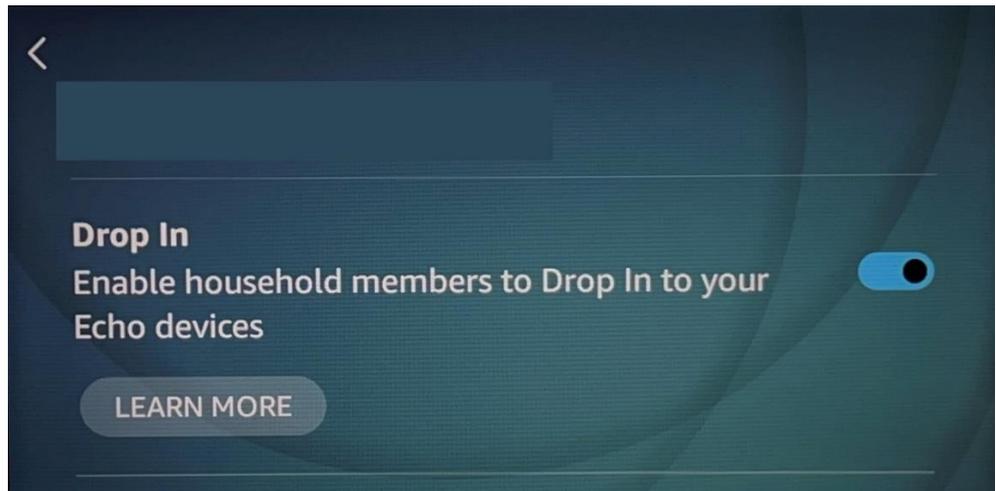


Step 4
of 4



Now that you have enabled Drop-In permissions for your contact, they will need to do the same from their Alexa-enabled device or Amazon Alexa app. Once you have both enabled permissions, you are ready to use the feature.

To look through their camera or to share a voice message, try saying, ***“Alexa, drop in on (contact name).”***



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



You may have questions about using Amazon Alexa for communication and contacting others. Here are some frequently asked questions about this type of technology.

- **Why do I have to give up my privacy to use Alexa to connect to others?**
 - Anytime you make a call or send a text message from your phone, you are agreeing to let the other person know your phone number and other forms of personal information. This is the same idea with Amazon Alexa.

- **Does Alexa listen to my conversations?**
 - No, Amazon Alexa is only programmed to store voice commands you use and your recent call log. No part of the phone or video conversation is recorded or saved anywhere.

- **Does syncing my contacts on the Amazon Alexa app share my contacts with Amazon?**
 - Yes, by syncing your contacts to the Amazon Alexa app, you are consenting to store this information in the Amazon cloud.

