Is it needed to install an antivirus to a Parallels Desktop virtual machine?

- Parallels Desktop for Mac Standard Edition
- Parallels Desktop for Mac App Store Edition
- Parallels Desktop for Chrome OS Enterprise and Education Edition
- Parallels Desktop for Mac Pro Edition
- Parallels Desktop for Mac Business Edition

The question of installing an antivirus (AV) on a Parallels Desktop virtual machine is valid, however, it is crucial to recognize that the necessity of an antivirus solution within a virtual environment like Parallels Desktop virtual machines (VM) hinges upon several factors, chiefly your specific use case and individual circumstances. Scenarios warranting additional protection may include workplace/organizational security policies or other external requirements. In situations, such as this, you may proceed to install additional protection.

It is pertinent to note that while macOS and Chrome OS, two of the host operating systems often used with Parallels Desktop, are renowned for their implicit security features, simply installing an antivirus program does not guarantee invulnerability. It's still strongly advised to follow basic security principles and adhere to fundamental security practices e.g. principle of least Privilege (PoLP), regular installation of updates, and usage of strong and unique passwords.

In the case of Chrome OS, you have the option to bolster your online security through alternative means such as installing ad-blocking browser extensions for web filtering.

Note: we recommend to avoid running multiple antivirus software programs concurrently within a single operating system. Doing so can lead to a significant decrease in system performance caused by conflicts between the antivirus programs.

Do I need to install an antivirus on a Windows VM?

Windows operating systems are often targeted by a wide array of malware and cyber threats due to a large attack surface, making antivirus protection a critical consideration. Among the various antivirus options available, built-in Microsoft Bitdefender stands out as a solid choice chiefly due to its seamless integration with Windows VMs. As an added advantage, Microsoft Bitdefender is optimized by Microsoft, ensuring compatibility and performance optimization within the Windows environment.

Antivirus in Windows VMs on Mac computers with Apple silicon

It is also essential to note that not all antivirus solutions are compatible with Arm architecture. Some popular antivirus software, such as TrendMicro or Malwarebytes, may not offer support for Arm-based systems, limiting your options for comprehensive protection. However, there are some antivirus solutions specifically designed and optimized to work seamlessly with Arm architecture ensuring that you can effectively safeguard their devices against malware and cyber threats without compatibility issues. Examples of these compatible antivirus solutions include CrowdStrike, Bitdefender, Panda, Norton, and ESET.

Antivirus in Windows VMs on Mac computers with Intel processors

Mac computers with Intel processors have broader compatibility with a wide range of antivirus software options and as such, you have more flexibility and can choose from a wide range of antivirus software options.

Antivirus in Windows VMs on Chromebooks

Just as with Intel-based Mac computers, you can choose from a wide range and make use of various antivirus software options compatible with the version of Windows OS you are running in your virtual machine.
