



How to Switch Internet Providers

Everything you need to know on what to look for in an Internet Service Provider and all the right steps to switch so you won't experience a lapse in Internet coverage.



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1. Understand What is Important to You

When looking for an Internet Service Provider, or ISP, you should take some time to define what is the most important to you in a provider. We recommend weighing five different categories. Think about Internet speed, customer support, Internet delivery type, price, and reliability.

We find that the top two categories that are most important to customers are speeds available and customer experience, but let's break down all five.

Internet Speeds

This category isn't so much of what is the fastest speed you can get with a provider but understanding the speed you need. We find that many people make the mistake of basing their speed package choice based on price alone.

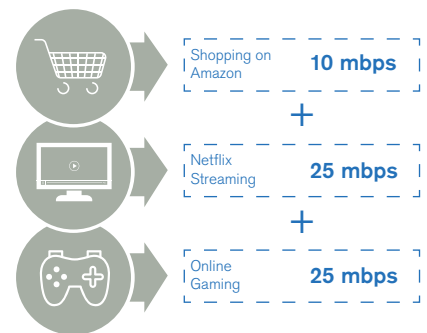
While price is important, if you use the internet heavily, have multiple people in your home, or use aggressive applications like video streaming or gaming, you really should be on a higher speed package.

Equally important to usage, is the sheer number of connected devices you have in your home. Do a quick count of all the cell phones, laptops, tablets, Smart TVs, Smart appliances, computers, gaming systems or virtual assistants, like Amazon's Alexa, you have in your home.

Many people are astounded once they count them up. Each of these devices is using your Internet connection whether you're using them directly or they are running in the background.

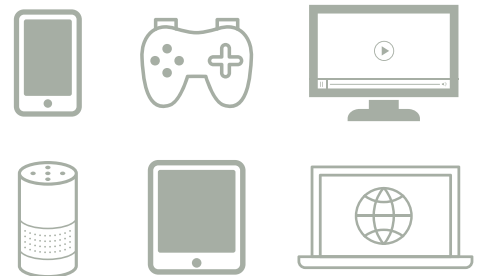
If you base your choice on price alone, you'll likely end up on the wrong speed for your needs which will result in slow speeds, buffering, and long load times. Ultimately, you're going to end up frustrated. Do your research and define what exactly you're going to use the Internet for before deciding on speed.

Internet Activities

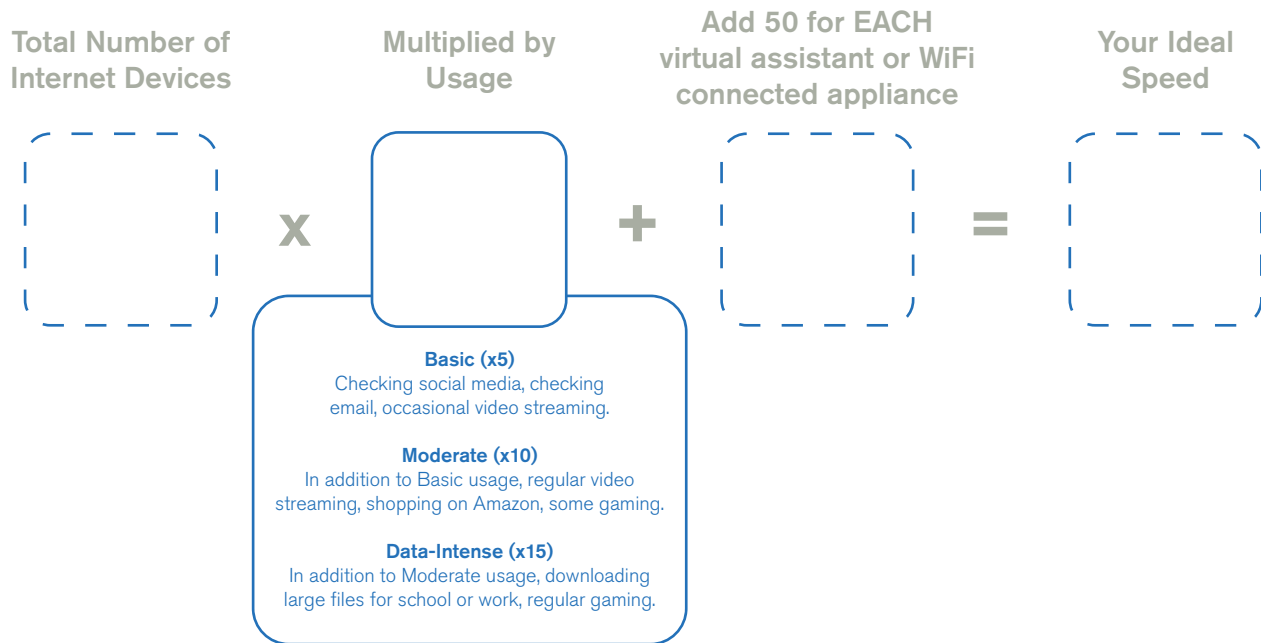


= 60 mbps Total

Number of Connected Devices



Equation to Help Calculate Minimal Speed Needed



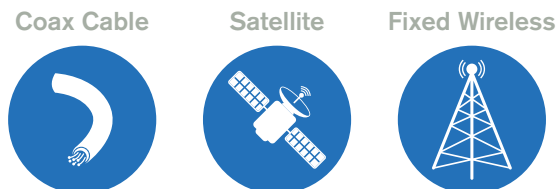
Customer Experience

Another big area to consider is customer support and experience. If you have questions, concerns or need troubleshooting help, look for an ISP that you can contact easily and has extended support hours.

For example, at Astrea, we can be contacted by phone, email, live chat online, and several social media channels. We also offer 24/7 support by phone. With a little research you should be able to find most of this information online.

Internet Delivery Type

Sometimes, an ISP has several different ways they can deliver your Internet connection to your home or business. The most common connection type, especially in more densely populated areas, is coax cable Internet. If you're unfamiliar with coax cable Internet, this is the black cord that is either aurally hung or buried to connect to your house. It then runs inside to connect to your modem to give you access to the Internet.



If you live in a more rural location, you may still be able to get faster speeds via a satellite connection or a fixed wireless connection. Satellite, as the name alludes, delivers your Internet connection from a satellite. Fixed wireless delivers your Internet connections from a stationary, or fixed, location on a tower.

For more information on:

Satellite

Fixed Wireless

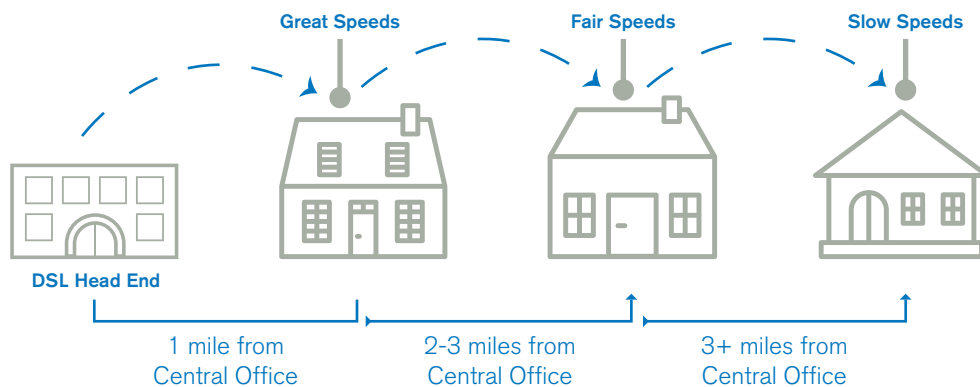
Internet Delivery Type (Continued)

Otherwise, you may be able to get a DSL connection, however, you don't typically see the same kind of speeds as with the other connection types. DSL, or Digital Subscriber Line, was great piece of technology when it first came out. It could reach a great number of people and connect them to the Internet. However, it does have a few limitations.

You can get decent speeds with DSL if you are close to the "central office." Think of a DSL central office as the source, or signal of origin for the Internet connection. From the central office, the connection is distributed out to homes. As the distance increases from the central office, or source of the connection, to your home, the signal weakens, and you may not see the higher speeds.

This is where cable, satellite and fixed wireless have a marked advantage, not only in speeds available, but consistency in the speeds delivered to your household. Whether you live right in town or out on a back country road, you'll get a consistent speed.

DSL hasn't been upgraded fast enough to meet the needs of speed and technology for today's world. It does do a good job getting a high quantity of people a basic connection, especially in more rural parts of America.

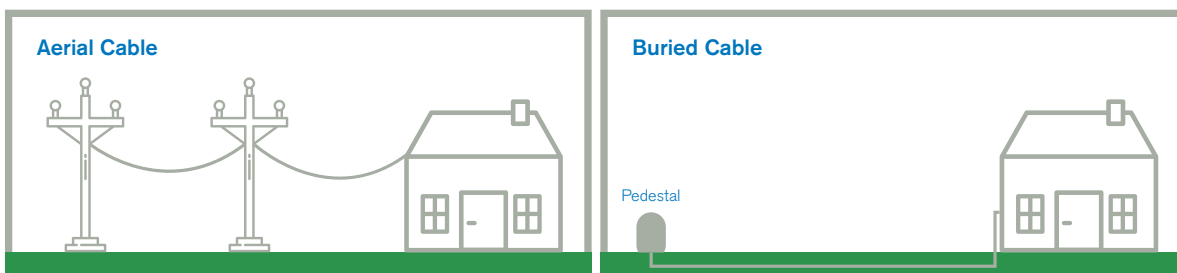


Reliability

Depending on the Internet delivery method, many different factors impact reliability. The biggest reasons we see that impact reliability is weather. For a coax connection, it usually has to be pretty severe to impact your connection. Think of things like a direct lightning strike, a tornado or a fallen branch taking down a line.

These impacts are even further reduced when the coax line is buried underground rather than hung aerially. Think about when you're looking at a telephone pole, there are a variety of different lines and wires that are strung up on the pole. They are hung up on the pole rather than buried under ground. This is what we mean when we say that coax can either be buried or hung.

For other types of connections, reliability may be dependent on factors like line of site or anything obstructing a receiver, think ice buildup during the winter or severe storms.



Price

Finally, consider your budget and what that means for how you'll be able to use the Internet. Compare similar services from different ISPs in your area and don't forget to ask about any installation costs or trip charges.

If you're looking for more than just an Internet connection and would like to have TV and phone services, you could save by bundling your services as long as your location qualifies for additional services. Many ISPs offer discounts or deals when you choose to bundle several services together.

2. Investigate the Cost to Cancel

Another component you'll need to consider before switching is any cost to cancel. Your current Internet Service Provider may have early contract termination fees, so be sure to investigate that before moving forward. Talk to the provider that you are interested in switching to as they maybe be able to help you with this.

3. Research Other Internet Service Providers



This one probably seems a bit obvious, but the next step is to really dive in and see what providers are in your area. Remember all the things that are important to you as we defined in step one and find a provider that best meets all of those needs.

We know this part of the process can be a little overwhelming. We recommend starting with a site like **broadbandnow.com** and typing in your ZIP code. This will give you a great list of providers in your area to start with so you can start researching each provider and verifying service availability.

4. Order Your New Service

After you've selected the provider that can get you the speed and type of Internet you're looking for, you're ready to start setting up your new connection. The first thing you'll want to do is verify when they can install and when you can get your old service disconnected. Aim to do this in way that will minimize a lapse in service. We recommend ensuring the install date is a week or two prior to your disconnect with the old service to ensure you won't lose any coverage.

5. Cancel Your Old Service

The final step is to actually go ahead and cancel your existing service. Give your old ISP call and schedule to disconnect the service.

Do you qualify to get an Astrea Internet connection?

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