



Tip Sheet

How to avoid smartphone bill shock

If you do not monitor how much data you are using each month on your smartphone or tablet, you could be in for a nasty surprise. The tips below will help you avoid an unexpectedly high bill.

1. Know your data allowance

This is usually measured in megabytes (MB) or gigabytes (GB).

2. Know your billing period and extra charges

Keep track of when your monthly billing period starts and finishes. Read the Critical Information Summary (CIS) to see what extra charges you will incur by going over your data, call or text allowance. Depending on your provider, you can be charged a per megabyte charge for every megabyte you use over your data limit or you may get upgraded to an extra data package at an extra cost (for example, \$10 for an extra gigabyte of data). For more information, read our [excess data charges article](#).

3. Track your data usage

Keep track of how much data you have used with your provider's smartphone app or your account on your provider's website. Do not ignore the data usage alerts your mobile provider sends you. The information about how much data you have used can be delayed by up to 48 hours, so you may be over your limit by the time you receive an alert or check your usage.

4. Connect to Wi-Fi

Set your smartphone to connect automatically to your home or office Wi-Fi and look for free Wi-Fi hotspots when you are out to offset your mobile data usage.

5. Streaming and updating apps

Be aware that streaming video or music and automatic software updates use up large amounts of data. You can change your settings so these services (and others) run only when you are connected to Wi-Fi. For more information on how much how much data common mobile phone activities use, access our [mobile data tip sheet](#).

If you have received an unexpectedly high bill and you cannot resolve the issue with your provider, you can contact the [Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman](#) (TIO). The TIO is a free service that help will help to resolve your complaint quickly.

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN)
Australia's peak body representing communications consumers

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