Have you ditched your landline? If you have, you aren’t alone. About 40 percent of American homes use only cellphones. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been tracking cellphone use for years and it recently released the latest statistical information on cellphones. Each year, there has been about a 5 percent increase in the number of people using only cellphones.

The numbers from the CDC survey are interesting. Nine percent of homes only had a landline and 48 percent had both a landline and a cellphone. But the results are very age-specific. Younger people rely more on their cellphone with two-thirds of those under 30 having no landline. Only 14 percent of those over 65 have no landline. Men are more likely to have only a cellphone than women. The Midwest is the most landline-free area (44 percent), followed by the South, the West, with the Northwest, which had 25 percent of people living in cellphone-only households.

When it comes to financial matters, cellphone use has been one of the things that has gradually increased our expenditures on phones. At first, it doubled the phone costs for the landline plus the cellphone, but now as several members of the family have their own phones, it may have an even bigger impact on your budget. I’ve found at my house that the costs of the cellphone and landline make that bill one of the largest that I pay each month.

Should you take out the landline and reduce your phone costs? That depends on your use and your level of comfort with the cell phone. First, let’s consider what that landline guarantees you.
If the cellphone tower goes down, you have no phone. For that reason, some people are hesitant to ditch their landline because of safety concerns. In addition, the 911 system shows an address when you dial in, no matter if you communicate with the operator or not. Cellphones can reach the 911 system, but you have to tell them where you are if you
are in trouble. Is your cellphone service consistent and clear at most of the locations you call from?

There are “holes” in service areas throughout the Fairbanks area. There is one location on my way home that the call drops as I drive through it. If you don’t get consistent service, don’t rely on it as your only phone.

My daughter and her family have gone to cellphones only at her house. She took the landline out since it wasn’t very consistent. My phone at her house is very inconsistent. During our last trip, I had to stand still in one location while I was trying to communicate with Alaska Airlines concerning my plane ticket. So make sure your phone works well all the time before pulling out the landline.

Check to see what else is included in your landline coverage. Do you have Internet service through your phone company? How about a security system tied into the landline? Make sure you understand what else you’ll be turning off if you go to a cellphone only. Consider the usage on your cellphone. Add the minutes on your landline to those of your cellphone and make sure your plan is adequate to cover all those minutes. You don’t want to get hit with overages, they are very expensive.

Deciding whether to take out your landline is a very personal decision. Only you can decide if you are ready to take the plunge.

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