# How To Manage Data Usage

All residential customers are given a basic data package of 1.5 TB as part of their internet service. Every time information is downloaded from or uploaded to the internet, part of that data is used. So, what exactly uses data, and how can you reduce your data usage?

## What Uses the Most Data?

Every service uses data, but the amount used will vary. A task like checking email requires very little data, while streaming video or music requires much more.

**Streaming Services**

For most customers, video streaming services like Netflix, YouTube, or Sling will use the most data. Netflix, for example, uses the following amounts of data:

- For SD (standard definition) video, Netflix uses around 0.7 GB an hour
- For HD (High Definition 1080p) video, Netflix uses around 3 GB an hour
- For UHD (Ultra High Definition 4K), Netflix uses around 7 GB an hour

Keep in mind that whenever you watch a video on social media apps like Facebook or Instagram, that counts as streaming video, too. Scrolling through photos on Instagram can also easily use several GB of data if automatic sync is turned on since that means the app is constantly downloading new photos.
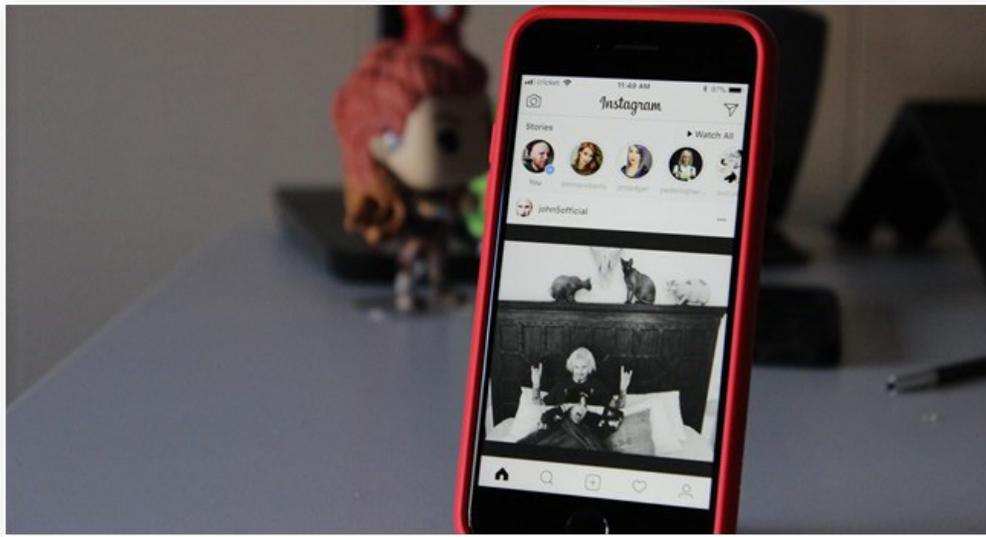


Music streaming services like Spotify or Apple Music use a lot of data, too, though not as much as video streaming apps.

**Video Games**

If you or your children are gamers, downloading games can also be a cause of substantial data usage. Whether they are console or PC, most games nowadays are upwards of 20 GB in size (and many games are 50 GB or more!). That means every time a new game is downloaded, at least 20 GB of data will be used. For the following account, over 55 GB of data were used 10 different days, and that was all from just downloading games!
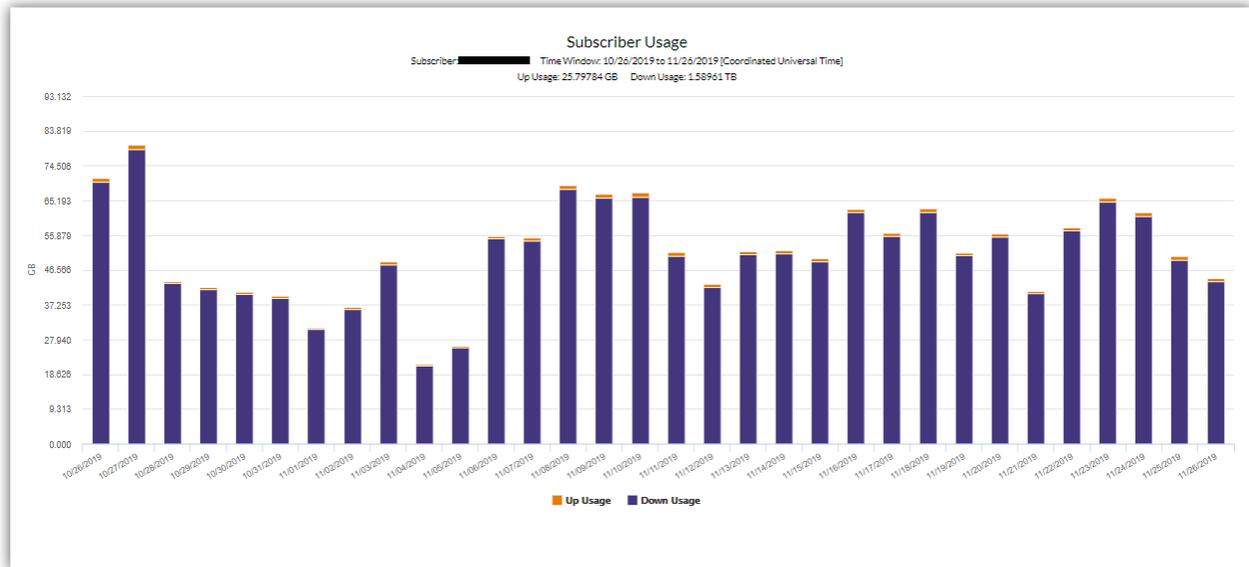


Updates to games can easily be several GB in size, so those have the potential to drive up your data usage, too.

**Security Cameras**

If you have a Nest Cam or Dropcam home security camera and subscribe to the associated cloud recording service, the upload data usage can easily exceed a 1.5 TB data package every month.

## What Does *NOT* Use a Lot of Data?

Any text-based activity—like checking email, surfing the web, looking up a recipe, etc.—uses significantly less data than video, music, or gaming does. Scrolling through social media can also be included here—as long as you have video autoplay turned off.

## How Can I Reduce My Data Usage?

For most people, the standard 1.5 TB data cap will be more than enough. However, if you find yourself using more than 1.5 TB per month, here are some tips and tricks to reduce your data usage.

**Change the Video Resolution on Streaming Services**

4K streaming uses a lot of data! If you have multiple TVs streaming 4K at all times, consider turning some or all of them to 1080p. For Netflix, that equates to 4 GB of data saved per hour. If you have a streaming box like Roku, Amazon Fire TV, or Apple TV, you may be able to set the whole box to stream only 1080p. For most streaming boxes, the resolution settings can be accessed in the following ways:

*   **Roku:** Settings > Display Type or Roku bandwidth usage menu
*   **Fire TV:** Settings > Display & Sounds > Display > Video Resolution
*   **Apple TV:** Settings > Video and Audio > Resolution
*   **Android TV:** Settings > Display & Sound > Resolution

If you find you are still using an excess of data, consider turning some of your TVs to SD.

Most streaming services also have a feature that allows you to set the maximum resolution at the account level. This is especially helpful if you regularly watch multiple TVs, or if you have a lot of members on one account and you want to limit usage. On Netflix, this feature can be accessed by going to: Settings > My Profile > Playback Settings and selecting your desired resolution. For Sling, this feature is accessed by going to: Settings > Connection.
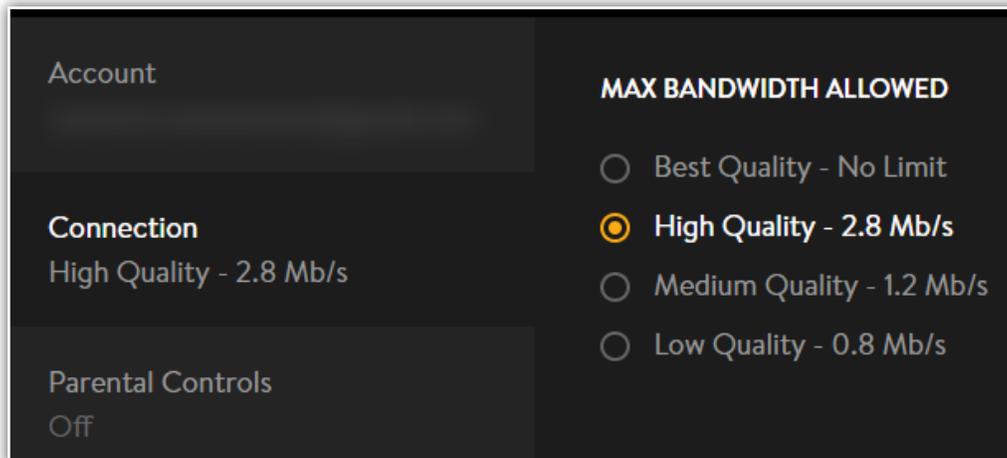
## Turn off Automatic Updates and Automatic Backups

If you have automatic updates or automatic backups turned on for your apps, consider turning those features off. Cloud storage services like Google Drive or Dropbox are set to automatically upload new photos and videos. This can consume a lot of data, especially if you take a lot of photos or have multiple computers associated with one cloud backup account.
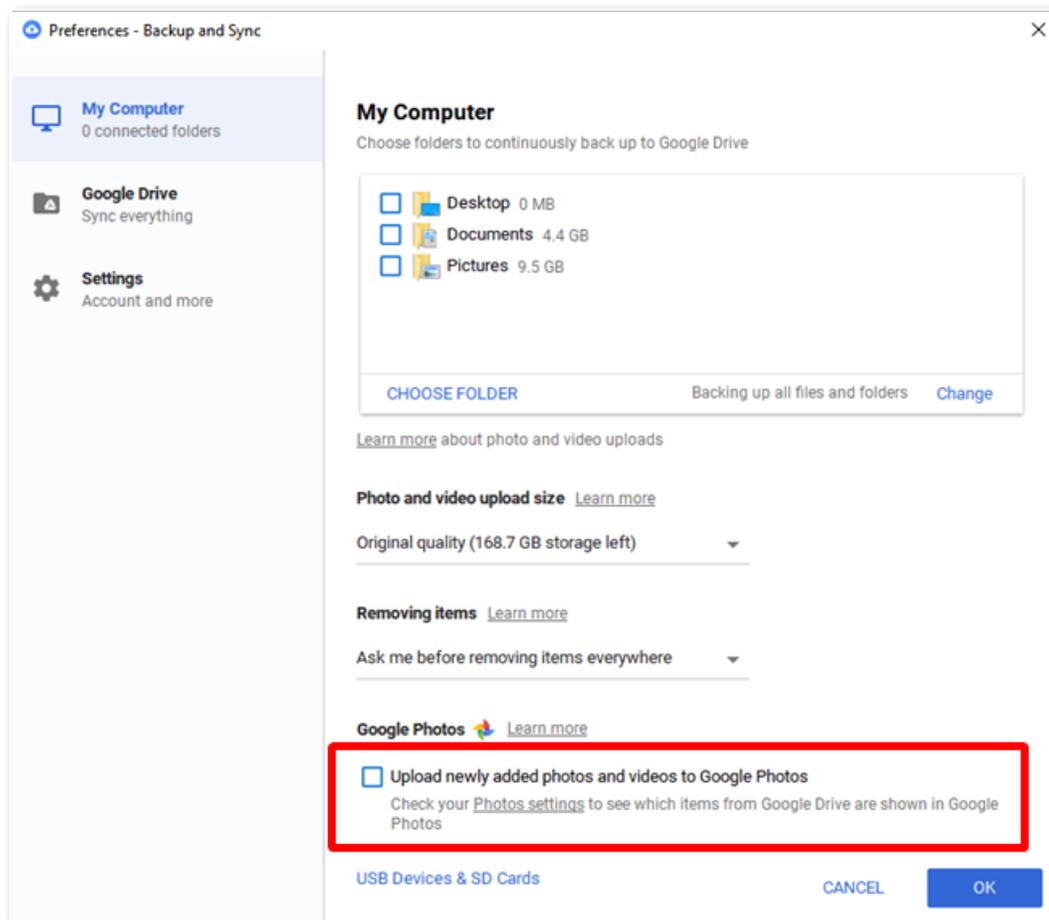


For security cameras, consider setting them to record only when you are not at home and only when they detect motion. This can ensure they are not uploading dozens of GB of recordings at a time, especially when the recordings are of your empty front doorstep!
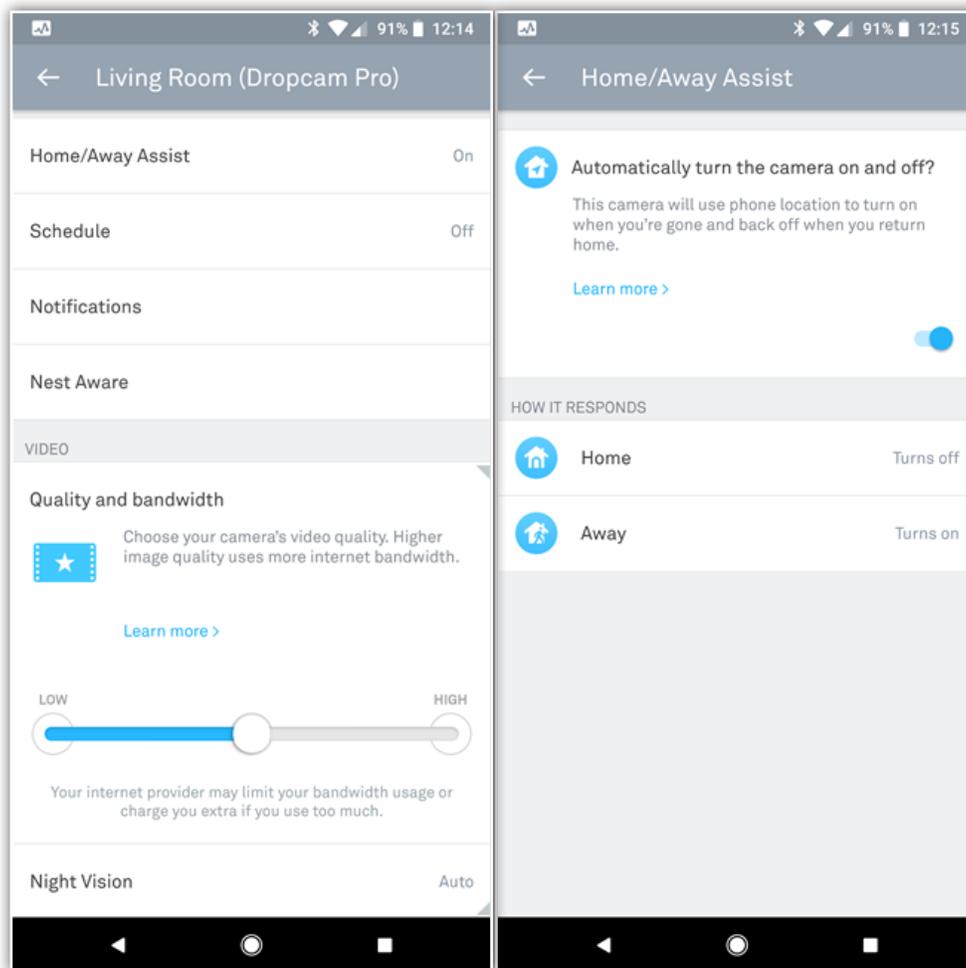
There is also a feature on most security cameras that will allow you to lower the quality of the recording to save yourself some data.

### Plan "New Game Days"

If you are a gamer, consider setting "new game days," which are days when you know you won't use a lot of data otherwise, so you dedicate them to downloading new games. These might be days at the end of the month when you have a lot of data left, or days in months when you will be out of town, so you know you won't go over your data cap.

If you find that none of these solutions are working, feel free to call us at 800-859-6826 or come in to our office to find a data package that works for you!