

Tech Tips for Seniors

Phone Service Options

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Generations members have witnessed a communications revolution.

We remember telephones tethered to walls by a cord, party lines and phone sets with actual dials (thank goodness for expandable handset cords).

We remember when there was only one phone company in town and the company even owned the phones.

Then along came push-button phones, cordless handsets, cell phones, and now Internet phone service.

You now have to buy your own phone set.

Cable TV companies began offering voice service, the old phone companies began offering TV programming and new companies started offering voice service through Internet connections in our homes.

Some mobile phone companies also offer “landline” phone service in addition to the cell phones we carry in our pockets and purses.

Here are a few of the phone/voice service choices available today:

- The “old” phone company still offers voice service, which can be sold separately or in combination with TV and/or Internet services.
- In addition to TV programming, the “old” cable TV company will provide phone service

that is part of an Internet connection they can provide.

- Other companies now offer “voice-over-Internet” services that use a Wi-Fi connection sold separately by the “old” phone or cable TV provider.

The good news is that you can keep your same phone number, regardless how the voice signal reaches your landline phone set.

A big question now is, what is the least expensive option?

Your existing bill will indicate how much you are paying for voice service. And you can call a competitor to ask what they charge just for stand-alone phone service.

They’ll all want to sell you double-play or triple-play services ... combinations of TV, Internet and voice.

Finally, you can search the Internet to learn what VOIP (voice-over-Internet-protocol) services charge per month.

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If you have questions about any of this, feel free to make a “Technology Tips” appointment on Tuesday mornings at Generations, when the center opens. Just call the main number: 215-723-5841.

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