# Energy and You

## Your Relationship with Energy

Understanding your relationship with energy is a powerful tool to assist in the energy efficiency journey. Below are some questions to reflect on your energy use, both in short and long term thinking. There are no right or wrong answers, and it is best to answer these to the best of your ability.

### Long term:

* Are there months with higher or lower use?
* Is my home efficient in heating and cooling?
* When was the last time I checked other available energy plans?
* When was the last time I thought about my current tariff?
* When did I last actively improve my energy efficiency?

### Short term:

* What times do I use energy? e.g., as soon as you get home, steadily throughout the entire day, mainly at night or in the evening?
* Do I know the energy star rating of my appliances?
* Do I use appliances around the same time each day/week?
* Do I use multiple large appliances at the same time e.g., dishwasher and washing machine, hot water, and dryer?
* Have I avoided using an appliance because of its energy use/cost?

It may be a good idea to answer those questions again, post program participation to see what changes.

Now that you have reflected on your energy use, the next step to understanding your energy is to follow the Household Energy Checklist below. This checklist provides you with the opportunity to see what your current level of energy efficiency is and gives quick and easy tips on how to assist.

## Household Energy Saving Action Checklist

### Cooling

* Use a fan when suitable.
* Close the curtains in places of direct sunlight.
* Ventilate the house – open doors and windows in the evening when it is cooler and turn off the air conditioning.
* Set the aircon temperature to 24-26 degrees for cooling.

### Fridge

* Turn off any second fridge or freezer when not being used.
* Don’t open the fridge door too often or hold it open for long.
* Don’t pack your fridge too full, it can prevent circulation of cold air.
* Keep seals around your fridge doors clean. Dirty seals can cause cold air to leak out and waste energy.

### TV and Computers

* Use an energy-saving setting if your TV has one.
* When buying a new TV or computer monitor energy rating labels to upgrade to a high efficiency model which will help you spend less on the running costs over the life of the purchase.

### Lighting

* Turn off lights in rooms you aren’t using.
* Use natural light whenever possible e.g. open curtains and blinds.
* Use energy efficient light bulbs e.g. incandescent or halogen with LED or compact fluoro.

### Kitchen/ Cooking

* Use lids on pots whenever possible to keep heat in.
* Only fill the electric kettle with as much water as you really need.
* Use a small bench top oven/electric fryer for cooking smaller meals.
* Only use a dishwasher when full and possibly on a shorter cycle.

### Laundry

* Wash clothes in cold water when you can. It’s about a third of the energy and cost of washing in warm water.
* Avoid using a dryer and hang clothes on the line instead.
* Consider replacing an older washing machine/ dryer (more than 10 years old) with a newer energy-saving model. Choose the right size for your needs as a larger one will cost more to run.

### Hot Water

* Take shorter showers (e.g. less than 5 minutes). Heating hot water uses a lot of energy.
* Install a water saving shower head. To check yours, do a one-minute bucket test to find out how much it is used. A good shower head will use less than 8 litres in a minute.
* Fix any leaking taps, especially if they are hot water taps.

### Heating

* Close doors, keep heat in the rooms you use and close off those you don’t to avoid heating the whole house.
* If you have a heater with a thermostat, keep the temperature below 20 degrees.
* Block any gaps under external doors that are causing cold draughts.
* Close curtains before sunset and at night to keep the heat in.
* Refer to the energy rating labels when buying a new heater. Upgrading to a high efficiency one will save on running costs over the life of the purchase.

## Questions to Ask to Find the Best Plan

Before searching for a new plan, it is good to consider your needs and desired outcome. The following is a list of possible questions to ask yourself or a retailer when gathering information.

These are split between questions about bill costs, plan details, and accessibility.

### Bill Costs

* What is the recent history of price changes in this plan?
* What fees are involved with this plan?
* Will there be a fee for changing my plan/retailer?
* Will I be notified of any upcoming discounts or specials?
* What is the daily supply charge?

### Plan Details

* What tariffs are applied to this plan?
* Are there any specials or discounts you could offer?
* Is there a lock-in contract with this plan?
* Are there bundle options available for gas or internet?
* Can a controlled load be added without changing plans?

### Accessibility

* Do you have documents to explain my bill?
* What is your customer assistance policy?
* What options are available for customers having accessibility difficulties?
* Can I receive all the information and bills via email or accessible format?