

## Buying an HDTV

As you're shopping, you'll probably see some enhanced definition TV (EDTV) sets. EDTV isn't one of the digital broadcast formats -- it's a description of the level of picture quality the set can produce. An EDTV set can produce better quality than SDTV, but it's not an HDTV set. Most EDTV sets are flat-panel LCD or plasma sets. The DTV transition is not the first change to the TV signal. In 1946, the National Television System Committee (NTSC) began setting standards for American broadcasting. In 1953, NTSC standards changed to allow color television, and in 1984, they changed to allow stereo sound. Those changes were different from the DTV switch because they were backwards compatible -- you could watch the new signal on your trusty old TV. With DTV, you'll need some new gear, and the gear you choose will affect whether you can receive and view high-definition video. You can learn about buying a DTV set in How Digital Television Works -- here, we'll focus on HDTV.

When you start shopping, keep in mind that HDTV requires three parts:

A source, such as a local, cable or satellite HDTV station

A way to receive the signal, like an antenna, cable or satellite service

An HDTV set

If you purchase an HDTV-ready set, you'll need a receiver before you can watch high-definition broadcasts.

Most people start with the set. You can choose: An integrated HDTV, which has a digital tuner, also known as an ATSC tuner, built in. If a station near you is broadcasting in HDTV, you can attach an antenna to an integrated set and watch the station in high definition.

An HDTV-ready set, also called an HDTV monitor, which does not have an HDTV tuner. HDTV-ready sets often have NTSC tuners, so you can still watch analog TV with them. This is the option for you if you want to have HDTV capabilities later on but aren't ready for the financial commitment now. Your picture quality will still be better than on your old TV, but it won't be high definition until you get an HDTV receiver.

Designing and building an HDTV that could display all of the ATSC formats would be virtually impossible. For this reason, HDTVs have one or two native resolutions. When the TV receives a signal, it will scale the signal to match its native resolution and de-interlace the signal if necessary. A good rule of thumb is to choose a set that has a native resolution matching the signals you plan to use most often. Film fans will generally want displays with the highest possible resolution. Sports fans will generally want displays with the highest possible progressive frame rate.