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Transfer the domain or just change the nameservers: which one do you need

Domains & Addresses

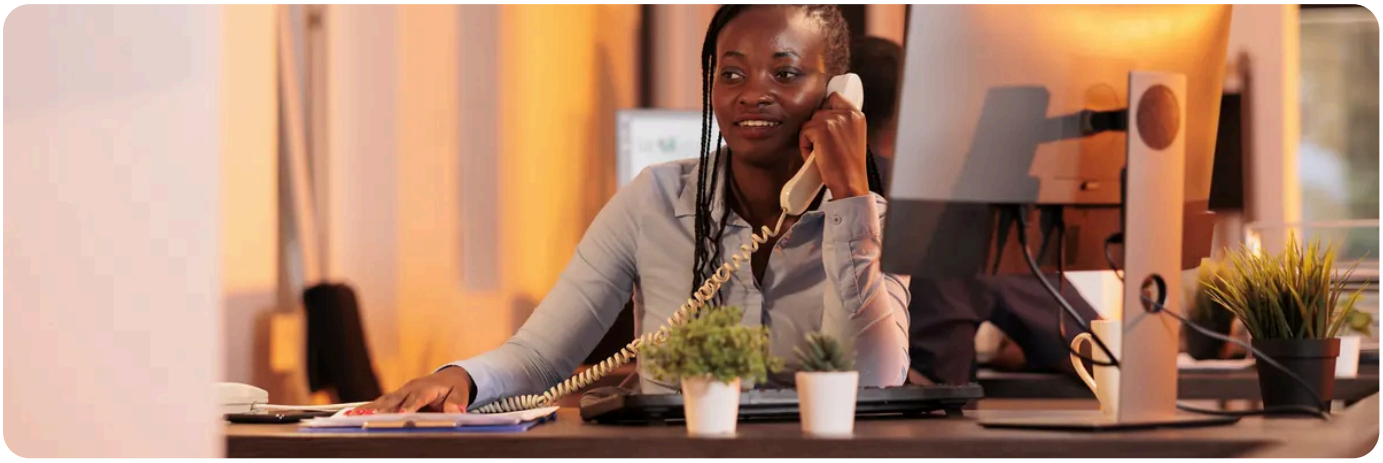
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Transfer the domain or just change the nameservers: which one do you need

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Short answer: they are two different operations, and many people do the wrong one. **Changing the nameservers** decides where the DNS zone lives, that is, who answers for your site and your e-mail. **Transferring the domain** changes who manages the registration: who renews it, who bills it. To get a site working on new hosting, changing the nameservers is almost always enough. A transfer is only needed when you want the domain at another registrar.

Side by side

	Changing the nameservers	Transferring the domain
What changes	Who answers for DNS: site, e-mail, subdomains.	Who manages the registration and the renewal.
Where you do it	At the registrar where the domain is, in its panel.	You ask the new registrar, with an authorisation code from the current one.
How long it takes	Minutes to a few hours, until it reaches everyone.	Usually five to seven days after it is confirmed.
Cost	None.	For most extensions it includes another year of registration, shown before you confirm.
Conditions	None.	Older than 60 days, unlocked, not expired, and the owner’s e-mail reachable.
Does the site go down?	Only if the new hosting is not ready yet.	No. The domain keeps working during the transfer.
Can you undo it?	Yes, in the same place, by putting the old nameservers back.	Not simply: it is another request, with its own conditions.

Which of the two, in four cases

1. **The domain is at another registrar and the site will stay here.** Change the nameservers (or, if you want to keep the e-mail there, only the records that point the site). You do not have to transfer: **pointing your domain to us**.

2. **The domain is here and the site will live elsewhere.** Keep the zone here and change only the record that points the site, so the e-mail does not follow it: **domain with us, site somewhere else**.

3. **You want everything in one place** (the invoice, the renewal, the panel). Then do transfer: **how to transfer a domain to us**.

4. **You want to leave.** Transfer to the new registrar: **transferring your domain to another provider**.

The two do not have to happen together.
What takes the site and the e-mail down is pointing the nameservers at a place where there is nothing yet, not transferring. And changing the nameservers moves the whole zone: if your e-mail is at the old place and you do not copy the MX and TXT records to the new zone, messages stop arriving. Copy them first.

Country domains (.ao, .co.ao, .mz, .co.mz) also use the authorisation code, like the others. And who owns the domain never changes through either of these: see **registry, registrar and registrant**.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure which of the two you need? Tell us where the domain is and where you want the site.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **Nameservers: what they are and which ones to use with us** →
- **How to transfer a domain to us** →
- **Pointing your domain to us: nameservers, step by step** →
- **Domain transfer** →

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