

KNOWLEDGE BASE · PUBLIC DOCUMENT

CNAME on the bare domain: why it is not allowed and what to use instead

Domains & DNS

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The short answer: a **CNAME** says “this name is really that other name”. The DNS standard forbids a CNAME on a name that has **any other record**. The bare domain (example.com, also called the root or apex) always has the **SOA** and **NS** records, and nearly always **MX** and some **TXT** records. So a CNAME there is impossible. Some panels refuse it; others accept it and quietly break e-mail and verifications.

What you want, and what to use

What you want	What to use
Point the bare domain at a server with a fixed IP	An A record (and AAAA , if the server has IPv6) with the address.
Point the bare domain at a service that only gives you a name (site builder, shop platform, load balancer)	An ALIAS or ANAME type, if your DNS provider has one; Cloudflare’s CNAME flattening ; or the CNAME on www and a redirect from the bare domain to www .
Point www at an outside service	A CNAME on www . No problem here: www has no other records.
A CNAME and a TXT on the same subdomain	Not allowed either, by the same rule. Put the TXT on another name, or swap the CNAME for an A record.
An MX or NS pointing at a name that is a CNAME	Not allowed. MX and NS must point at a name with its own A or AAAA record.

Fixing it without breaking e-mail

1

Check what the service actually asks for. Many services that give you a name for `www` also publish IP addresses for the bare domain. If they do, use them in A records, as in **pointing at another server: A record or CNAME**.

2

If all you have is a name, look in your zone editor's list of types for **ALIAS** or **ANAME**. It is not a CNAME: the DNS server itself looks up the target's address and answers with an IP, so it lives happily next to MX and TXT records. Each provider implements it in its own way.

3

If the zone is on Cloudflare, you can create the CNAME at the root: Cloudflare answers with the target's addresses instead of the CNAME (it calls this flattening). See **what changes with Cloudflare**.

4

If neither exists, put the **CNAME on `www`** and redirect the bare domain to `www`, on your hosting or in the service itself. **`www` or no `www`** helps you pick which one is the main address.

5

Check at the end that e-mail is still there: `dig example.com A +short`
`dig example.com MX +short`
`dig example.com CNAME +short` The first should return an IP, the second your mail servers, and the third should come back **empty**. (example: *example.com* is a domain reserved for examples, and `192.0.2.10` and `2001:db8::10` are documentation addresses; replace them with yours.)

If the panel let you save a CNAME on the bare domain, do not keep it. With a CNAME at the root, resolvers may ignore that name's MX and TXT records: mail stops arriving, SPF and verifications fail, and sometimes only for some senders, which makes the problem hard to find.

This is what www is for. It has no SOA, NS or MX, so it can be a CNAME freely. When an outside service only gives you a name, serving the site on www is nearly always the simplest path.

A service wants a CNAME on your bare domain and you are not sure what to enter? Tell us the domain and what the service asks for.

[Open a support ticket](#)

SEE ALSO

[DNS records explained: A, CNAME, MX, TXT and TTL](#)

[Pointing a subdomain to another server or service: A record or CNAME](#)

[www or no www: which address to choose for your site](#)

[Cloudflare: what it is, what changes, and what stays the same](#)

[MX records in depth: priority, several mail servers and the mistakes that lose e-mail](#)

[Reading a whole DNS zone line by line: names, trailing dots, TTL and the @ sign](#)



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