

Understanding SuperWhisper Models

How to choose the right model for privacy, speed, and accuracy

10-minute read

Quick Reference

Why This Matters

The model you choose determines where your audio gets processed—and that's not just a technical detail. For government health work, it's the difference between "completely fine" and "potential compliance issue." This guide will help you make that choice with confidence.

The Big Picture: Local vs. Cloud

Before diving into specific models, you need to understand the fundamental choice: **where does your audio go?**

☐ Local Processing

Audio is converted to text entirely on your device. Nothing leaves your machine.

- PHI-safe by design
- Works offline
- No usage limits
- Free models available
- Slightly lower accuracy (but still very good)

☒ Cloud Processing

Audio is sent to external servers, processed, and returned as text.

- NOT for PHI or sensitive data
- Requires internet
- Highest accuracy available
- Faster on older hardware
- PRO subscription required

The Bottom Line

If you're working with anything work-related, patient-related, or sensitive, use **local models**. They're free, they're accurate enough for professional use, and they eliminate the "did that audio go somewhere?" question entirely.

FREE Tier Models (Local Processing)

These models come with SuperWhisper at no cost. They run entirely on your device—your audio never touches a server. For government health work, these are your go-to options.

MODEL	TYPE	SPEED	ACCURACY	WHEN TO USE IT
Nano FREE	LOCAL	★★★★★ Instant	★★★★☆ ~85%	Quick experiments, casual notes, testing your setup. Only ~40MB—downloads in seconds. Great for "does this thing even work?" moments.
Fast FREE	LOCAL	★★★★☆ Very Fast	★★★★☆ ~88%	Start here. Daily emails, Teams messages, quick documentation. The sweet spot between speed and accuracy. This is what most people should use.
Standard FREE	LOCAL	★★★☆☆ Medium	★★★★☆ ~90%	Important documents, external communications, anything you don't want to edit much. Worth the extra second for content that matters.

□ Try This

Dictate the same sentence with Fast and Standard models. Can you tell the difference? For most everyday content, you probably can't—which is why Fast is usually the right choice. Save Standard for when accuracy really counts.

PRO Tier Models — Local (Still PHI-Safe)

If you upgrade to SuperWhisper Pro, you get access to better local models. Same privacy guarantees, better accuracy. Worth considering if you dictate a lot of technical content.

MODEL	TYPE	SPEED	ACCURACY	WHEN TO USE IT
Pro PRO	LOCAL	★★★★☆ Medium	★★★★☆ ~92%	Technical vocabulary, medical terms, acronyms. Better at unusual words that trip up free models.
Ultra Turbo v3 PRO	LOCAL	★★★★☆ Fast	★★★★★ ~95%	Best local model available. If you need privacy AND high accuracy, this is it. Fast enough for daily use, accurate enough for important work.

PRO Tier Models — Cloud (NOT for PHI)

These models send your audio to external servers. They're incredibly accurate, but that accuracy comes with a privacy trade-off. Only use these for content you'd be comfortable posting publicly.

MODEL	TYPE	SPEED	ACCURACY	WHEN TO USE IT
Ultra PRO	CLOUD	★★★★★ Very Fast	★★★★★ ~97%	Personal projects, creative writing, content you'd publish anyway. Blazing fast, incredibly accurate—just not for work.
Nova PRO	CLOUD	★★★★★ Very Fast	★★★★★ ~97%	Long recordings, podcasts, personal interviews. Has speaker separation—useful if you're recording conversations (non-sensitive ones).

⚠ Real Talk About Cloud Models

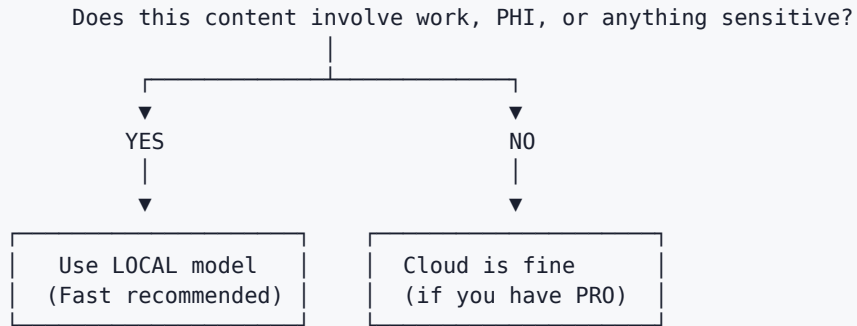
Cloud models are fantastic for personal use. But the moment your dictation includes patient names, internal discussions, or anything you wouldn't want on a billboard, switch to local. The accuracy difference isn't worth the risk.

Quick Decision Guide

Not sure which model to use? Find your situation below.

"I'm handling PHI or sensitive work data" → Fast or Standard (FREE local)	"I'm just getting started with SuperWhisper" → Fast — good balance, free, PHI-safe
"I need the best accuracy AND privacy" → Ultra Turbo v3 (PRO local)	"I'm dictating a personal blog post" → Ultra or Nova (PRO cloud) — go for accuracy
"My Mac is a few years old" → Nano or Fast — lighter on resources	"I want to test if everything works" → Nano — smallest download, instant results

The One-Question Decision Tree



What About Accuracy Numbers?

You might wonder: "Is 88% accuracy good enough?" Here's some context:

What Those Percentages Actually Mean

An 88% accuracy rate sounds like you're getting a B+ on a test. But in practice, it means roughly 1-2 words per sentence might need correction. For a typical email:

You say: "I wanted to follow up on our meeting from last Tuesday and ask if you've had a chance to review the proposal."

Fast model (88%): "I wanted to follow up on our meeting from last Tuesday and ask if you've had a chance to review the proposal."

In this case: 100% accurate. The model handles common phrases very well.

The accuracy drops happen with unusual words, technical jargon, and proper nouns. "Dr. Weisskopf's recommendation" might become "Dr. Wice Copf's recommendation." That's what the remaining 12% looks like.

❏ PRO TIP: DON'T OBSESS OVER ACCURACY

The goal isn't perfect transcription—it's faster communication. Even if you need to fix a word or two, you're still way ahead of typing everything. A 90% accurate model with a quick correction is faster than 100% accuracy from your keyboard.

How to Change Models

Switching models takes about 10 seconds:

1. Click the SuperWhisper icon in your menu bar
2. Click **Settings** (gear icon)
3. Select **Models** from the sidebar
4. Click **Download** next to any model you want to try
5. Once downloaded, select it as your active model

You can download multiple models and switch between them. Want Fast for quick emails and Standard for important documents? Set up different modes for each (we cover that in the exercises).

❏ Your Assignment

Download the **Fast** model right now if you haven't already. It takes about 2 minutes depending on your connection. Once it's ready, try dictating a sentence. Did it work? Congratulations—you're ready for the exercises.