

Key information sheet

Condensation and mould



There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. Warm air can hold more moisture than cold air. When hot air cools down or meets a cold surface, it releases some moisture and tiny drops of water appear - this is condensation. You notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath or shower.

- It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. It can be seen in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards.
- When condensation happens on a wall, the wall soaks up the moisture and becomes damp. If this happens over a period of time, mould can grow on the damp areas
- The damp left by condensation will also damage plasterwork and wooden surfaces.

What is mould?

- There are many different types of mould. Moulds are types of fungi that can grow on a range of materials that are damp and usually in dark places.
- Mould can grow on walls, wood, carpet, furniture and fabrics if they stay damp for long periods of time.
- Mould can give off an unpleasant smell and damage your health

How do I reduce condensation and mould?

Ventilation

The best way to reduce condensation and mould is to by making sure your home is well ventilated.

- Leave a window or door open, if possible, when cooking or having a bath or shower. Use the extractor fan if one is fitted.
- It is better to have at least one window slightly open for most of the time rather than having it wide open for a short time.
- Remember to think about the security of your home and close windows when you go out.

Making less moisture

If there is less moisture in the air in your home, there will be less condensation. Activities such as cooking or having a bath or shower produce a lot of moisture, but there are simple things you can do to reduce this:

- When cooking, put a lid on saucepans.
- Hang your laundry outdoors to dry if you can.
- If you can't, it's best to dry it in the bathroom. Close the door and leave the extractor fan on or window slightly open.

Keeping warm

Keeping your home warm can reduce condensation, as warm air holds more moisture than cold air, so it stays in the air as vapour rather than turning into water when it touches a cold surface.

- It is usually better and cheaper to have a continuous low level of heating rather than short bursts of high heat.
- Be careful not to over-ventilate your home, as this will make your home colder and increase the chances of condensation appearing. It will also make your home more expensive to keep warm.
- Advice about the costs of heating your home is available from the Energy Saving Trust on 0800 512 012

Treating mould

You can remove small patches of mould with a fungicidal (mould-removing) wash. These are available cheaply from most large supermarkets or DIY shops. Make sure you follow the safety precautions that are given with the product. If you have a larger build-up of mould in your home, please report it to us – our contact details are at the bottom of the previous page.