

Damp and mould

What you need to know



Damp and mould

Mould growth and condensation in your home are signs that the air in your home is too wet.



Condensation occurs when water vapour inside your home condenses on a cold surface. It can occur at any time of the year and is seen as misting or water droplets on windows, walls, tiles and other areas.



Mould growth happens when mould spores settle on surfaces that are damp through condensation or rain water. Mould commonly looks like small black spots but can be grey or green spots.



Water vapour is created by normal, everyday living in your house such as breathing, perspiration, washing, cooking, bathing, drying clothes, and burning fuel, such as gas or paraffin.

The main factors that cause condensation:



Too much moisture being produced in your home



Not enough ventilation in your home



Cold surfaces in your home



The temperature of your home

Why condensation is becoming a problem?

Condensation damp is the most common type of damp and is thought to affect almost 1 in 5 homes in the UK. Some of the measures that we take to make our homes more energy efficient reduce natural airflow and ventilation. This includes the use of double glazing, draught excluders, and insulation in walls and lofts. This prevents warm, damp air from leaving your home and means that humidity builds up to higher levels and worsens condensation.

Without regular ventilation, condensation often results in unhealthy living conditions with the possibility of unsightly black mould growth, peeling decorations, damage to clothing or fabrics and unpleasant musty damp smells within a property.

In its severest form, a long term condensation problem can result in permanent damage to plaster work and timbers in the home.



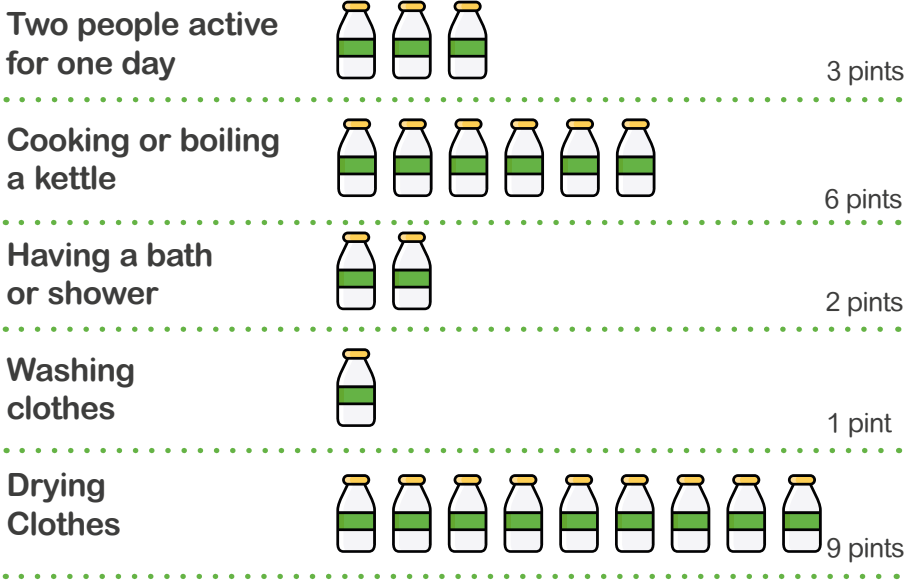
Health effects

Mould and fungal growth can cause health problems including:

- headaches
- fatigue
- depression
- sneezing
- skin rashes
- social well-being issues
- cardiovascular and respiratory illness

Did you know?

On average this much moisture can be produced in your home per day:



Top tip

When painting kitchens and bathrooms make sure you use appropriate paint (Kitchen/bathroom grade or acrylic eggshell) as it will be less absorbent and easier to clean.

Average condensation produced in your home each day is 21 pints - that's a mop bucket full of water!

First steps to fight condensation

These are some simple things you can do straight away to help reduce condensation and stop mould growth.



Make sure you dry your windows and windowsills every morning, as well as surfaces in the kitchen or bathroom that have become wet.



Drying clothes outside or piping the tumble dryer's moist exhaust air to the outside. Avoid drying clothes on your radiators.



If it is raining you should dry your washing in your bathroom. Make sure the bathroom radiator is on, any window is ajar, the extractor fan is running and the door is closed.



Don't cook with internal doors open and either put the extractor fan on or open the window.



After cooking, leave the window securely open and leave the extractor fan running to allow moisture to escape.



Try not to allow food to boil in open pans, use lids to cover.



Ventilate your home by ensuring that any vents, where fitted, are open and clean.



To reduce the risk of mildew do not overfill your wardrobes and cupboards as this stops air circulating, also don't store clothes in plastic bin bags.



Cross ventilation can help prevent condensation by opening a small window downstairs and one upstairs on the opposite side of the house, or diagonally opposite if you live in a flat.



Avoid heating one room to a high level and leaving another room cold, this will increase the condensation in the unheated rooms.



Running the cold water for a bath before the hot water. Leave the bathroom door closed whilst the bath is filling to reduce the spread of steam.



Where possible avoid placing furniture against outside walls. If you do, ensure you leave a gap of at least 3 inches/75mm (roughly the length of a bank card) between your furniture and the walls of your home to allow air to circulate.

Removing mould growth

If you do have mould growth in your home you should remove it as soon as it can be seen.



1. Wash the affected area thoroughly

Use a specialist mould remover/cleaner. These are available from most supermarkets or DIY shops. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully and make sure you use rubber gloves and any other recommended protective garments. Apply to the entire area affected by the mould. Use a stiff brush or cleaning pad on cement-block walls or other uneven surfaces.



2. Rinse and dry

Use a damp cloth to rinse any residual detergent off the treated surface. A wet/dry vacuum cleaner can be helpful for removing water and cleaning items.



3. Disinfect

Disinfectants are intended to be applied to thoroughly cleaned materials and are used to ensure that most micro-organisms have been killed. Do not use disinfectants instead of, or before, cleaning materials with soap or detergent. a solution of 1½ cup household bleach per gallon of water should be used as a disinfectant. Keep the disinfectant on the treated material for up to 10 minutes.



4. Clean up

Discard any loose porous materials where mould growth cannot be removed or has become ingrained into the material (e.g, ceiling tiles, plasterboard, carpeting, and wood products). Bag and discard mouldy items; if properly wrapped, items can be disposed with household rubbish.



Warning: Bleach and disinfectant should be handled with caution. Bleach should never be added to ammonia or other chemicals; toxic gas will be produced. Wear gloves, mask and eye protection when using disinfectants. Bleach fumes can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat, and damage clothing and shoes. Make sure working areas are well ventilated.