

Condensation & Mould

What is condensation?

Condensation is water droplets that appear on a cold surface when it comes into contact with warm air, e.g. on windows on a cold morning, on a bottle of milk when it comes out of the fridge, etc.

Condensation and mould is most common in kitchens and bathrooms because of the high levels of moisture in the air which has nowhere to escape.

What causes condensation?

There are four main factors that cause condensation:

- Too much moisture being produced in the home.
- Not enough ventilation.
- Cold surfaces.
- The temperature of your home.

What steps can I take to reduce condensation in my home and get rid of mould?

When you're in your home you produce moisture from breathing, cooking, showering and boiling the kettle. For example, when cooking and washing up you could produce around two litres of water.

A mix of moisture, cold surfaces and not enough ventilation can lead to increased condensation and mould growth.

A few simple changes could reduce condensation and mould growth:

Cooking

- Cover pots with lids when cooking.
- Use an extractor fan or open a window to let steam out of the kitchen.
- Shut the kitchen door.
- Only boil the water you need in the kettle.

Washing

- Dry clothes outside.
- If you need to dry clothes indoors make sure the room is heated and ventilated.
- Keep a window open to allow moisture to escape.
- Do not dry your washing on radiators.
- Make sure your tumble dryer is vented properly.

Showering

- Turn on an extractor fan if you have one or open a window to allow moisture to escape.
- Keep the bathroom door shut when showering.
- Use a bath mat to soak up moisture and reduce condensation.

Ventilation

- Ventilate bedrooms by leaving a window slightly open at night if it is safe to do so.
- Do not block air vents.
- Open windows slightly for at least 15-20 minutes each day on both sides of your home to help air circulate.
- Condensation is most common in the colder months. This is the most important time to ventilate your property.

Heating

- Make sure your home is heated adequately.
- It is effective to keep your home at a constant temperature all day. This will help raise the internal temperature of surfaces and reduce condensation forming.

Other tips

- Don't overfill your wardrobes and cupboards. A lack of ventilation and air moisture trapped in warm cupboards can lead to mould growth.
- Move furniture away from external walls so that air can circulate.
- Wipe down cold surfaces to remove any moisture that has settled after cooking or washing.

What steps can I take to treat mould?

If you are experiencing issues with mould then you need to follow the advice below to treat it first and then follow the advice listed above to prevent it coming back.

- For tiles use a toothbrush dipped in bleach or diluted vinegar. Leave it for 15 minutes before rinsing well.
- Stained sealant may have to be cut out and reapplied.
- Mould on shower curtains can be removed using a diluted mix of bleach and water. Spray it on, then wipe it off.
- Use a branded mould remover and treatment, but make sure that you follow the manufacturer's instructions and it is from a recognised brand. You can buy mould removal products from most DIY stores.
- Make sure you use a good anti-fungal paint which will help stop mould from returning.
- If your clothes are affected, you will need to wash or dry-clean them.

I've followed all of the advice, but I still have condensation damp or mould

Make sure you contact us and let us know more. We will ask you what steps you have taken to prevent condensation and mould in your home. We will then book an appointment for a surveyor to attend your home to make an assessment.

If we think the cause is related to your lifestyle we will work with you to find out what might help. It is likely that we will ask you to follow the advice above.

Rising and penetrating damp

It is important that you call us to let us know if you notice any of the symptoms set out below.

Rising damp

Rising damp is caused by ground water moving up through a wall or floor. The damp-proof course for your home could be broken or soil may block the damp course on the outside wall.

This could result in moisture seeping through.

What to look for:

- Damaged skirting boards or plaster.

- Peeling paint or wallpaper.
- “Tide marks” on the surface of walls.
- Lifting floor coverings.
- The ground level outside your home is above the damp course.
- Crumbling plaster on the external walls.
- Blocked drains.

Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp is caused by water leaking into the property from the outside walls. This could be caused by faulty guttering, roofing or internal leaks.

What to look for:

- Damp patches on walls or ceilings which darken after rain.
- Blocked or cracked gutters.
- Leaks inside your home.