

# Mould and Condensation

Condensation can cause black mould on walls, furniture, clothes and curtains. It can also damage plasterwork and other surfaces. This leaflet explains more about condensation and simple steps you can take to reduce it.

## WHAT IS CONDENSATION?

Condensation is caused when moisture in the air meets a cold surface such as a window or wall, and turns into drops of water. This tends to happen more in colder weather (even if it's dry) as cold air can't hold the everyday moisture you produce in your home. You can see the drops of water on windows on a cold morning, on the mirror when you have bath or shower and on other cold surfaces such as tiles or cold walls.

## WHAT CAUSES CONDENSATION?

There are three main causes of condensation in your home. These are:

- Too much moisture being produced in your home
- Not enough ventilation
- Cool temperatures.

You need to deal with all of the causes to cure or control a condensation problem.

There is always moisture in the air, even if you can't see it. Everyday activities like cooking, washing, bathing, drying clothes and even breathing, add moisture to the air inside your home. In fact in just one day you can add up to 26 pints of water to the air in your home! **TAKE A LOOK HOW:**

2 people active for 1 day	3 pints	Washing clothes	1 pint
Cooking and using a kettle	6 pints	Washing dishes	2 pints
Having a bath or shower	2 pints	Drying clothes indoors	9 pints
Using a paraffin or bottled-gas heater	3 pints	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26 PINTS</b>

## HOW TO AVOID CONDENSATION

### Cut moisture:

- Hang your washing outside to dry. If this isn't possible then hang it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open, or extractor fan on if one is fitted;
- Cover boiling pans when cooking and use the extractor fan if one is fitted;
- If you use a tumble dryer then make sure it's vented to the outside;
- When you are running a bath put the cold water in first. This cuts the steam produced by a massive 90%!
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors to stop vapour moving around the house;
- Don't use the gas cooker to heat your kitchen – burning gas produces moisture.

### Ventilate more:

- Try 'cross ventilation' – this is opening a small window on each side of a room to create airflow between the two. At the same time open room doors. This will help the drier air to flow through. Make sure your open windows don't create a security problem and remember to close them when you go out;
- If you have trickle vents on your windows try to keep them open as much as possible;



- Ventilate the kitchen whilst you are cooking or washing up and also for about 20 minutes afterwards. If you have an extractor fan or hood try to use them;
- Ventilate your bedroom by leaving trickle vents open or a window locked open. PLEASE REMEMBER your security though;
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when you are using them. This will help stop moisture moving around your home;
- Move your furniture away from the walls slightly to allow air to circulate around. Where you can put wardrobes and furniture against internal walls and try not to overfill them as it restricts air circulation inside.

#### Raise the temperature:

- The best way to heat your home is through steady background heating left on during the day. Warm air holds more moisture than cold so if it's warm it's less likely that drops of water will be released around your home. Do keep an eye on your meters and how much it is costing you though;
- Try to heat the whole house as heating one room to a high temperature and leaving the others cold makes condensation worse. It's better to have a medium temperature throughout the whole of your home as warmer walls reduce the likelihood of condensation forming on them;
- Make sure you have your annual gas safety check to make sure the heating system works safely and efficiently;
- If you can't afford to spend more on fuel because of high quarterly bills, ask your fuel supplier or your local gas or electricity board about budget schemes that help to spread the cost;
- For free, independent and local energy saving advice call 0800 512 012.

#### PROBLEMS CAUSED BY CONDENSATION:

Condensation can cause mould and mildew growth. Mould will appear on any damp surface such as plaster, wallpaper and timber and mildew on clothes and other fabrics. The damp humid conditions it creates is also the ideal setting for dust mites. Both can aggravate conditions such as asthma and bronchitis.

#### DEALING WITH MOULD GROWTH:

Ventilating removes the moist air from your home and replaces it with drier air from outside. This helps to cut condensation. Here are some simple ventilation tips:

- Wipe off mould growth immediately with water. Do not use washing up liquid;
- To kill and remove mould growth, wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash. You will need to do this more than once as regular cleaning will help prevent mould re-growth. You can get this from a hardware or DIY store or supermarket. Always follow the instructions carefully. Do not use bleach;
- Dry-clean clothes affected by mildew and shampoo carpets;
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

## To find out more contact:

**0330 123 0700**

**Our phone lines are open from 8am - 6pm Monday - Friday**