

# Controlling damp, mould and condensation in your home



# Condensation

Condensation occurs in cold weather, or on cold, hard surfaces such as bathroom tiles and windows. Moisture in the air also condenses on cold walls, particularly in the corner of two external walls and in places where there is little air movement or poor ventilation. If left untreated the dampness caused by excessive condensation can lead to mould growth.

## First steps against condensation

Here are some basic things you can do straight away:

- Dry your windows, windowsills and any surfaces in your kitchen or bathroom which have become wet. Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.
- To kill and remove any mould growth, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash that carries a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) approval number. These washes are often available from supermarkets. Always follow the manufacturer's instruction. Don't try to remove the mould by using a brush or vacuum cleaner as you may breathe in the spores or spread them around more. Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Redecorate using a fungal resistant wallpaper paste and a fungicide paint.

## What causes condensation?

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



Everyday activities can add a lot of moisture to the air in your home;



Two pints



Nine pints



Six pints



Two pints



Four pints (for eight hours of use).

## What can you do?

Reduce the amount of moisture produced:

- When possible, dry clothes outside or hang them in the bathroom with the door closed and the window slightly open.
- Avoid putting clothes on the radiator.
- Avoid using bottle gas heaters.
- Cover saucepans when cooking.
- Keep bathroom and kitchen doors closed.
- Use extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens. If you don't have extractor fans, open the window slightly and keep the door to the rest of the house closed. Remember to close them afterwards to keep your home secure.
- If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented to the outside remember to keep your home secure.
- Don't use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen.



## Appropriate ventilation

- Use trickle vents to help ventilate your bedroom (if your window has them).
  - Poor air circulation can lead to damp and mildew developing.
  - Keep a small gap between large pieces of furniture and the walls.
  - Don't overfill wardrobes and cupboards.
  - Use the extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms.
  - Make sure that accessible windows will not cause a security problem and remember to close windows when you go out.
- Don't 'over ventilate' your home.

## Insulation and draught proofing

Loft and cavity wall insulation are the most effective forms of insulation.

The insulation will help to keep the surface temperature of the walls and ceilings warmer and will also help keep heat in. Draught proofing can also help reduce heat loss, but it is important not to draught proof rooms where there is a heater or cooker that burns gas or solid fuel. Don't block up permanent ventilators or airbricks installed for heating. Don't draught proof bathroom or kitchen windows.



## The temperature in your home

When heating your home, try not to have one room at a high temperature and leave the rest of the property cold. This can cause condensation. Keep doors of unheated rooms open to allow some heat into them. Ideally your home should be heated between 18 to 21 degrees Celsius, but older people, babies and people who are less mobile may need it to be warmer.



## Landlords and tenants

It is important that the tenant helps to reduce the condensation problems by taking steps to limit the amount of moisture produced in the property. Many of the measures needed to tackle condensation will also require the landlord to take action, such as improving the insulation of the property or installing ventilation and adequate heating. If after following the advice in this leaflet you continue to have problems with damp and mould, you should contact your landlord. If you do not get a satisfactory response from your landlord, you should contact your local Environmental Health department for advice.

**For more information, call the Environment Health Team at  
Huntingdonshire District Council on 01480 388302 or email  
[environmentalhealth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@huntingdonshire.gov.uk).**

Please tell us where the damp and mould is, how long the problem has been going on for, whether you have tried to remove the mould, whether you have told your landlord and what their response was and your landlords details. If you email us you can also include some photographs.