

# Damp, Mould & Condensation

## If your home suffers from damp, it could be caused by condensation

Damp can cause mould to form on walls, furniture and clothes and make window frames rot.

This leaflet explains how condensation is formed and how you can keep it to a minimum to reduce the risk of mould.

### Condensation

There is always moisture in the air, but basic household chores (such as cooking, taking baths and drying clothes indoors) can create more in your home.

If it can't escape, moisture can build up in the air in your house or flat. When it gets colder, the air cannot hold all the moisture and this is when condensation appears.

Condensation that doesn't dry out causes mould, mildew and rot. It appears mainly in cold or wet weather, on cold surfaces like windows, exterior walls and in places where there is little air movement.

It can be seen as black mould spots in corners, on or near windows and in or behind wardrobes and cupboards.

Condensation can occur in any home. Just the simple acts of every day living in a house can produce the perfect environment for condensation to form.

Examples of the amounts of moisture produced in a 24 hour period include:

Washing clothes	1 litre	
Drying clothes	3-7 litres	
Cooking	2-4 litres	
Bathing/showering	1 litre	
Breathing	1-2 litres	

## Is the damp condensation?

Damp can also be caused by:

- Leaking or cracked pipes, wastes or overflows
- water coming through the roof where a tile or slate is missing or spilling from a blocked gutter
- rising damp due to a defective or missing damp course

These causes of damp leave a tidemark.

If you do not think the damp comes from any of these causes and there is no 'tidemark', it is probably condensation.

## Reducing condensation

The following tips will help you to reduce condensation in your home.

### 1. Ventilate to remove moisture

- keep a small window ajar when someone is in a room
- use the trickle ventilators in UPVC double glazed windows
- ideally, bathrooms and kitchens should have extractor fans. If present, these should be used as they can be very effective and are cheap to run
- open windows for a little while each day to allow fresh dry air to circulate through your home
- when you are using the bathroom and kitchen, open the windows and leave them open for a short time afterwards to let the moisture escape
- ventilate cupboards and wardrobes by leaving them open for a while
- avoid putting too many things in cupboards and wardrobes as this stops the air circulating
- leave a space between the back of the wardrobe and the wall to allow air to flow and, where possible, position furniture against warmer internal walls
- vent any tumble dryer to the outside, unless it is the self-condensing type

### 2. Produce less moisture

- cover pans when cooking
- where possible dry your clothes outside on a line or in a well-ventilated room, ie with a window open or extractor fan on
- don't dry clothes on your radiators as this puts a lot of moisture into the air

### 3. Control where excess moisture goes

- close kitchen and bathroom doors when you use these rooms. Doing this will help stop the moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.
- wipe surfaces where moisture settles
- use a dehumidifier if you have one. These are cheap to run and the resulting drier atmosphere will be easier and cheaper to heat.

#### **4. Heating and insulation**

- condensation is less likely when the whole home is warmer, so use your heating if your home suffers from condensation
- in cold weather, consider keeping low background heating on all day, even when there is no-one at home
- to keep the heat in, ensure your home is insulated to the currently recommended levels

For information and advice about heating and insulation, please go to the website at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/energyefficiency](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/energyefficiency) or call the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234.

#### **Things to avoid**

- do not block airbricks or vents in the wall
- do not completely block redundant fireplaces – a hole the size of two bricks with a louvred vent over it will keep the chimney aired and dry
- do not draught-proof rooms where there is condensation or mould
- do not draught-proof a room where there is a cooker or a fuel burning fire, such as a gas fire

#### **Treating mould**

To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicide, used in accordance with the product instructions.

Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Avoid disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning as this may cause respiratory problems.

After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring.

#### **Still a problem?**

If you follow all the steps in this leaflet and damp, mould or condensation is still a problem there may be other things that can help, such as improving the insulation of walls and ceilings or installing extractor fans or other air vents.

**Translation? Tick this box and take to any council office.**

ترجمة؟ ضع علامة في المربع وخذها إلى مكتب البلدية. Arabic

অনুবাদ? বক্সে টিক চিহ্ন দিয়ে কাউন্সিল অফিসে নিয়ে যান। Bengali

需要翻譯? 請在這方格內加剔, 並送回任何市議會的辦事處。Cantonese

ترجمه؟ لطفاً این مربع را علامتگذاری نموده و آن را به هر یک از دفاتر شهرداری ارائه نمایید. Farsi

Traduction? Veuillez cocher la case et apporter au council. French

需要翻译? 请在这方格内划勾, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。Mandarin

Tłumaczenie? Zaznacz to okienko i zwróć do któregoś z biura samorządu lokalnego (council office). Polish

Tradução? Coloque um visto na quadrícula e leve a uma qualquer repartição de poder local (council office). Portuguese

Tercümesi için kareyi işaretleyiniz ve bir semt belediye bürosuna veriniz Turkish

other (please state)

**This can also be made available in large print, Braille or on audio tape**

Please call the Private Sector Housing Team for further advice.

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