

What is condensation?

Condensation is a common problem which affects lots of people's homes. It forms when water droplets in warm air come into contact with cold surfaces, such as a windows or walls, making them feel wet.

Although lots of everyday activities cause water droplets, including taking a shower, cooking, boiling kettles, using washing machines, ironing clothes and even breathing, there are also plenty of steps you can take to reduce condensation in your home.

They include:

- Keep a small window or trickle ventilator (which may be located at the top of your windows or on the wall next to them. These should slide open and close) open when someone is using the room
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when the rooms are in use and switch on an extractor fan to help remove humid air. (N.B. keep the fan on for approx. 30 mins after a shower or until the bathroom mirror/window is clear of condensation)
- Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling
- Keep cupboards and wardrobes well ventilated. Don't put too many things in them as this will stop the air from circulating. Where possible, position furniture against internal walls but make sure it is not touching the wall
- Avoid using paraffin or portable bottled gas heaters as they put a lot of moisture into the air
- Dry washing outdoors on a line, or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on
- If you have a tumble dryer, make sure it has a vent leading outside
- Set your heating at a steady temperature and leave it on, as this means condensation is less likely to form. Setting it to come on twice a day will make the problem worse as it will cause peaks and troughs in temperature. If you are worried about your bills increasing, your local citizen's advice bureau may be able to give you advice

If these steps do not help, the problem may be caused by something beyond your control, such as leaking pipes or rising damp. If you think this may be the case, please get in touch with us and we will inspect your home to check for any problems.

What is mould?

Mould is a fungus which grows from tiny spores which float about in the air. Condensation is one of its main causes as it creates the right conditions for the mould to grow.

How can I tackle mould?

You can treat mould in your home by:

- Killing the mould by using a fungicidal wash from the supermarket to wipe down walls and window frames. Make sure you buy a wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive approval number
- Dry-cleaning mildewed clothes and shampooing carpets. Don't brush or vacuum the mould as this can disturb the pores and cause breathing problems
- Redecorating using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent it from coming back. Make sure you don't cover the paint with wallpaper or ordinary paints as it will no longer be effective

Once you have tackled the mould, you will need to stop condensation from forming to make sure it doesn't reappear.

What shouldn't I do?

Please do not:

- Block permanent ventilators
- Completely block chimneys. You should always leave a hole and fit a louvred grille over it. Talk to your Technical Services Officer before making any changes and they will be able to give you advice
- Draught-proof rooms where there is condensation or mould
- Draught-proof a room where there is a cooker or a fuel burning heater such as a gas fire
- Draught-proof windows in the bathroom and kitchen

If you are unsure about what to do or have any other questions about tackling condensation and mould, please talk to your Technical Services Officer who will be happy to help.