

CONDENSATION AND MOULD IN YOUR HOME?

How do you spot condensation?

- ▶ Streaming windows and walls
- ▶ Damp areas can appear on walls, especially behind furniture and in corners
- ▶ Wallpaper can start to peel
- ▶ Mould growth, usually black mould, starts to appear on window frames, walls and ceilings
- ▶ Soft furnishings and fabrics become prone to mould and mildew
- ▶ There is a constant musty damp smell in the property



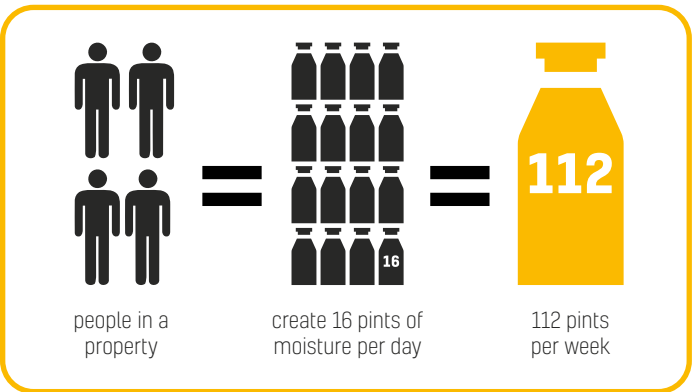
The cause of condensation, damp and mould

In a household of four people living together, each will contribute approximately 4 pints of moisture per day – through showering, boiling kettles, cooking etc. which amounts to over 100 pints of water per week! Other airborne contaminants which exist in a typical dwelling like dust mites, tobacco products, pollen – even chemical emissions from furnishing and building products further deteriorate air quality.

In older, less energy efficient homes, there is a natural escape for this hot, damp problem air – through ill-fitting windows and doors, uncarpeted floorboards, lofts without insulation and so forth. Improved building features such as cavity wall insulation, double-glazing and draft proofing prohibit ‘natural ventilation’. Stale, humid air is trapped – increasing the condensation problem in the home.

Did you know?

If the humidity level in the property is at 80% or above for 6 hours or longer over a prolonged period of time, then mould can occur leading to the dispersion of mould spores and various other mould problems that are known triggers of asthma, dust allergies and hay fever. High internal relative humidity in a property is the result of poor ventilation.



Mould

Prolonged condensation can lead to black mould which literally leaves its mark around the home. It can appear in places such as window frames, walls, furniture and even on clothes in your wardrobe.

There are specialist cleaning products which remove mould, and if the mould is severe, you may need to get a specialist in to remove it. Mould spores moves around through the air in the home, invisible to the naked eye, looking for damp, wet areas where it thrives. The only way to successfully remove black mould for good is to stop it from thriving by getting rid of the condensation - by improving your home ventilation.

There are over 10,000 species of mould! Not all of them are harmfully toxic but they will contribute towards allergy and health problems.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP REDUCE CONDENSATION

- ▶ If you have a washing machine or tumble dryer in your property, ensure that it is vented correctly. From just one load of washing two litres of water is emitted into the air.
- ▶ Where possible, try to dry clothes outdoors to prevent excess moisture escaping into your property. If you have no choice but to dry clothes inside we would always advise that you open your doors or windows in these rooms.
- ▶ When cooking, boiling a kettle, taking a shower or bath, ensure that your kitchen or bathroom door are kept closed to prevent steam going into colder rooms which will cause condensation to form.
- ▶ When cooking ensure that you cover your pans with a lid to reduce moisture. Also ensure that you have opened a window or you are using an extractor fan if you have one fitted. Don't turn off the extractor fan or close the window as soon as you finish cooking - leave it open for 15-20 minutes afterwards to clear the air.



- ▶ Similar to when cooking in the kitchen, when you are taking a shower or a bath ensure that you turn on an extractor fan or open a window to get rid of the steam that is created when running warm water in a cold environment. This will help reduce the amount of condensation that appears on your bathroom windows but won't eliminate the problem.

- ▶ Ensuring an adequate amount of heating in your property will improve the internal temperature of surfaces in the house and reduce the likelihood of condensation.
- ▶ Do not overfill your bedroom wardrobes and kitchen cupboards. With lack of ventilation and trapped warm air your overfilled cupboards are a breeding ground for mould as the air is not able to circulate freely inside.
- ▶ Many families have house pets and plants which produce moisture. Make sure you cover fish tanks and if you are suffering from excess condensation look to move your plants outdoors.
- ▶ Try to make sure that your furniture is at least 50mm away from the surrounding walls so that air can move around the property. Also try to put wardrobes against internal walls in your bedroom which will be less cold than external walls.
- ▶ If you use a room on a regular basis, such as a living room, open a window slightly to improve the ventilation in the room. Breathing is a major cause of condensation so this will help to improve the ventilation in your property.
- ▶ Double glazing, loft insulation and draft proofing will help to reduce the amount of heat that is lost from a property. Installing insulation will help to keep the temperature of the surfaces inside your property high.
- ▶ Adequate ventilation is essential to allow the moisture to escape from a property before it turns into condensation. Installing an energy-efficient extractor fan in the kitchen and bathroom can improve the humidity levels and prevent condensation.
- ▶ If you don't have an extractor fan in your bathroom or kitchen then make sure that you wipe down the surfaces in the bathroom and kitchen when you have been cooking or taking a shower to remove any moisture that has settled on the surface. This excess moisture that sits on the surface will quickly turn to mould which is difficult to completely remove.

