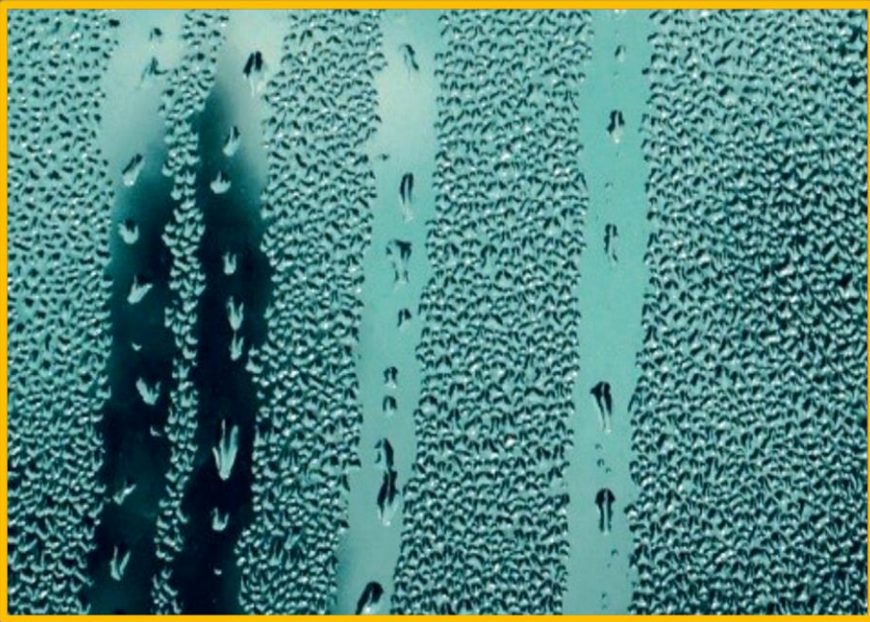


# Condensation Damp and mould



A guide to managing condensation,  
damp and mould in your home

## Condensation, damp and mould

### Condensation

Condensation is caused by moisture inside the home coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window or wall.

The water drops (or condensation) may then soak into the wallpaper or paintwork or even plasterwork and attract black mould to grow on its surface.

Condensation mainly occurs during the colder months, whether it is rainy or dry outside, and is usually found in corners and north facing walls, on or near windows; also, in areas of little air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are pushed up against external walls.

Condensation is the most common reason for dampness and this is when black mould is frequently seen.

### Types of damp

#### Rising damp

This type of damp is caused by water from the ground rising into the home.

Rising damp will usually affect basements and ground floor rooms, up to a height of 12 to 18 inches (300mm to 450mm). It can be seen all year round (usually as a 'tide mark' low down on the wall) but is more noticeable in winter.

If left untreated it will lead to crumbling wall plaster in that area and lifting wallpaper.

#### Penetrating damp

This type of damp will usually occur on external walls or ceilings. It will only appear because of a defect outside the home that permits water to pass from the outside to the inside.

This type of damp is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch.



Condensation on windows



Rising damp

Damp caused by water moving up through a wall and is usually stopped from causing damage by a barrier called a damp-proof course (DPC).

Other causes of damp include:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- Leaking or damaged roofs and tiles
- Leaking or blocked gutters
- Leaking around window frames

**If something else is causing the damp, then it is probably condensation.**

## Mould

Black mould is a fungus that can be found in homes where there is excess moisture. Mould thrives in areas that are warm and moist such as kitchens and bathrooms. It can appear in areas where there is condensation such as cold walls or around windows.

Poor ventilation may also contribute to black mould developing.

Left untreated the mould can spread on to furniture, curtains and clothing.

Black mould produces allergens, irritants and sometimes, toxic substances.

## Did you know?

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes. Even breathing adds some moisture.

One person sleeping adds half a pint of water to the air overnight and an active person adds twice that rate during the day:

- A family of four can add moisture to the air equivalent to 30 to 40 litres of water a week just by breathing
- Showering, cooking, bathing and washing can add 15 to 20 litres a week
- Drying clothes indoors can add 10 to 15 litres a week

## How can damp and mould can affect my health?

If you have damp and mould in your home, you're more likely to have respiratory problems, respiratory infections, allergies or asthma.

Black mould can make your asthma worse; the elderly, young babies or those with weakened immune systems, including those having chemotherapy maybe even more sensitive.



## Reducing condensation

There are four things to consider when dealing with a condensation problem - heating, insulation, ventilation, and excess moisture.

### Heating

Condensation is most likely to be a problem in homes that are under heated. Try to keep temperatures in all rooms to above 15°C.

### Insulation

Insulating your home will:

- warm the surface temperature of walls, ceilings, and windows.
- generally increase the temperature of the home.
- reduce heating costs thus allowing the home to be heated to a higher standard more affordably.

### Ventilation

Condensation will occur less if you allow air to circulate freely.

Make sure vents and airbricks are not covered or obstructed. Move furniture away from external walls by at least 50mm.

Striking the right balance between warmth and ventilation is important and can be very effective.

By opening windows or ventilating your home it may appear that you are losing some heat, but what you are actually doing is allowing warm moisture-laden air to escape and permitting cool dry air to enter your home.

Dry air is actually cheaper to heat than warm moist air!

The advice is to ventilate for an appropriate period of time, usually between 30 minutes to 1 hour a day, not to leave the windows open all day.

### Excess moisture

Take steps to reduce the amount of moisture in the air:

- In cold weather try to keep temperatures between 18-21°C in main living areas whilst indoors.
- Dry washing outside whenever possible. If you use a tumble dryer, one that has a vent through an outside wall is better for reducing moisture.
- Don't dry clothes on radiators. This will make your boiler work harder to heat your house and cost almost as much as using a tumble dryer, whilst creating a lot of condensation.
- If you have an extractor fan in your kitchen and/or bathroom, use it while you are cooking or bathing/showering and clean it regularly.
- Always ventilate or open a window when using the kitchen or the bathroom and close the doors to prevent moisture in the air from spreading to other parts of the house.
- When running a bath put the cold water in first; this results in significantly less condensation.
- When cooking, put lids on pans to reduce the amount of steam (moisture) being added to the air.
- If you have windows with trickle vents, leave them open as much as possible.
- Move furniture away from walls so that warm air can circulate.
- Don't cover air vents, they help moisture escape and ventilate your home.
- Avoid paraffin or gas bottle heaters. They produce large amounts of water vapour and are very expensive to run!

## Treating mould in your home

### If you find mould in your home, there are steps you can take to treat it yourself.

- Wipe down and dry surfaces where condensation occurs to help stop mould from forming.
- Wipe down areas that are affected by the mould with a fungicidal wash. Do not use bleach or washing up liquid.
- Fungicidal wash is available from most supermarkets or DIY stores – make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for the type you are using.
- Do not try to remove mould with a vacuum cleaner, or by brushing it away.
- Dry-clean any mouldy clothes and shampoo any carpets affected by mould.
- To help prevent the mould from returning, open a window to the first notch at opposite ends of your home (one at the front and one at the back, or one on either side). Leave them open for 30 minutes every day and open interior doors to allow the air to move through the house.
- If you need to redecorate because of mould, use a good-quality fungicidal paint and a fungal resistant wallpaper paste to help stop the mould coming back.
- Consider using a dehumidifier to help reduce condensation, musty odours and remove allergens from the air.

## Further information

Dealing with condensation is not easy. Only carrying out one or two of these steps may not solve your problem. You need to do as many as possible every day, so that it becomes habit and part of your daily routine.

### Childhood Asthma

If you are concerned about damp and mould affecting you or your child's asthma, contact your GP, asthma doctor or nurse for a review.

Further information about childhood asthma is available from the NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board.

Visit [lincolnshire.icb.nhs.uk](https://lincolnshire.icb.nhs.uk) and search **Childhood asthma**

### Connect to Support

Persistent damp or mould growth may need more specialised treatment.

Further information about managing damp and mould in your home is available from Connect to Support Lincolnshire

Visit [lincolnshire.connecttosupport.org](https://lincolnshire.connecttosupport.org) and check out the **Good Home Lincs.** webpages for more information about:

- Healthy Homes
- Home improvements
- Heating, energy, insulation & ventilation
- Finding trusted tradespeople
- Local services and support.