

Guide to Avoiding Condensation and Mould



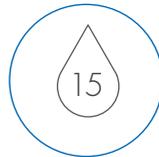
Picture above: Each load of washing and drying indoors can generate an extra 2.5 litres of water within the home increasing the risk of condensation and mould developing.

What is condensation and mould?

Condensation is formed when moisture stored in the air (such as mist from a shower) meets a cold surface (such as a mirror or cold exterior wall). You may have seen this on your bathroom walls after a shower, or on your kitchen windows after cooking. The 'average' family produces approximately 15 litres or 27 pints of moisture per day. That's a lot of water!. All this moisture is absorbed by the air and the warmer the air, the more moisture it can hold. When it meets a cold surface however, the air releases its moisture and leaves it behind; this is condensation and it is a key factor in mould growth.

Mould growth appears on any damp surfaces such as plaster, wallpaper and timber. It needs the following conditions to survive and grow:

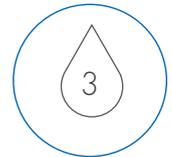
1. Food: Mould is able to exist on traces of organic matter such as dust.
2. Oxygen: Mould requires oxygen to breath like many organisms.
3. Water: Provided by the damp surface caused by condensation. This is the factor that you can control within your home.



15 liters water per day per person



1.5 litres per day drying clothes indoors



3 litres per day cooking with gas

Why does it matter?

When inhaled, the spores produced by mould can cause a variety of respiratory problems. Most commonly this will be similar to the symptoms of seasonal allergies however mould is also proven to increase the likelihood of children getting asthma, especially in children under the age of 2.

Along with respiratory problems, the mycotoxins produced by mould can kill neurons in the brain and impair its functions, as well as cause nervous disorders, mood swings, and irritability. They can also cause eye and skin irritations.

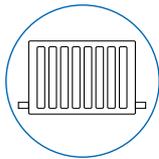


Picture above: Microscopic view of black mould fungi which can cause pulmonary infections and other unpleasant symptoms due to the spores they release into the air.

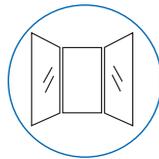
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What steps can you take to prevent this?

Mould is a fungus and one that needs specific conditions to survive. If you stop watering it, it will die. Below are some steps you can take to prevent mould growth:



Ensure your home is properly heated. The World Health Organisation guidelines suggest 21 degrees in a living room and 18 degrees in the bedrooms, falling lower at night and when you are out



Open windows when safe to do so



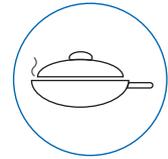
Wipe up spillages



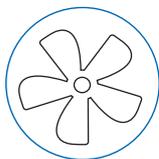
Dry any wet areas immediately - For example a wet floor after a bath or after mopping up



Dry wet clothes outside or in a dryer. Always make sure you use a vented or condensing tumble drier



Use pot lids when cooking, this will also save you energy!



Never isolate an extractor fan! Turning the fan off means moisture generated from showering and bathing will stay in your home



Indoor plants; moist soil provides a perfect breeding ground for mould, make sure to clean and move your plants around on a regular basis



Check over your home for leaks in the plumbing

Contact your landlord

If you have followed all of the above advice but are still seeing condensation running down your windows or seeing/smelling mould in your home then we would recommend you get in touch with your landlord.