



**THE HEALTHY HOME**

*Handbook*

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# INTRODUCTION

All homes are at risk of condensation, particularly through the winter months. Excess condensation in your home can lead to problems such as mould growth, which can affect your health and the health of your home. Small amounts of condensation are not usually a problem, and there are some everyday things we can all do to help prevent it.

As your landlord, it's our responsibility to provide you with a safe and healthy home. If you spot any damp or mould in your home or if following these tips does not help reduce excess condensation, let us know straight away.

We will arrange an inspection to identify the cause of any issues you are experiencing and work together to ensure any risks, hazards or problems are resolved as a priority.

# WHAT IS CONDENSATION?

Condensation happens when excess moisture in the air meets a cold surface and turns into water droplets. Everyday things like cooking, cleaning, showering, bathing and breathing produces excess moisture in our homes.

Condensation is more likely to occur in winter; this is because surfaces like windows and walls are colder and there is more moist, warm air inside our homes. We also tend to keep our windows and doors shut more in winter, meaning there is less ventilation to allow moist air to escape.

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Small amounts of condensation, like the steam from a shower condensing on a bathroom mirror, aren't usually a concern if it's kept on top of. If you spot condensation on a surface, wipe it down with a dry, clean cloth or kitchen towel.

**If you are concerned about excess condensation in your home, contact us.**

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If you spot condensation on a surface, wipe it down with a dry, clean cloth or towel.



# WHAT IS DAMP?

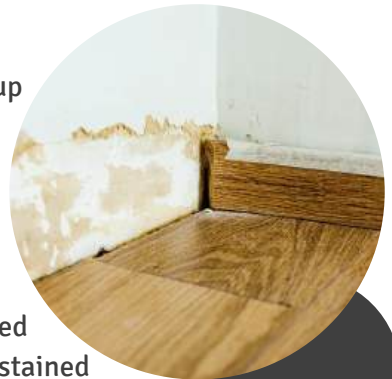


Condensation is a type of damp that is caused by excess moisture inside the home, but there are other types of damp too, such as rising damp, penetrating damp and traumatic damp which can be caused by a major leak. It's important to know how to spot these types of damp so that you can let us know if you have a problem and we can take action.

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## Rising damp

Rising damp is caused by water in the soil moving up through a wall and will only affect ground floor rooms or basements. It isn't very common and is usually prevented by a barrier called a damp proof course. Rising damp can occur if the damp proof course in your home is either missing, damaged or being bridged. Signs of rising damp include damaged skirting boards and floorboards, crumbling or salt-stained plaster, and peeling paint or wallpaper. Rising damp often has the appearance of a tide mark running along the bottom of a wall.



**If you think you have rising damp, penetrating damp or a plumbing fault, contact us straight away so that we can arrange an inspection and take action to fix the problem.**



## Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp is caused by water seeping through the walls from outside and is caused by structural problems such as faulty guttering or roofing. It usually shows up as a concentrated damp patch on walls, ceilings or floors with a clear edge. This type of damp often gets worse when it rains.

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## Traumatic Damp

**Traumatic damp is a type of dampness caused by water leaks in a building, which can lead to a wet-looking patch or area.**

**It can be caused by:**

- Burst pipes
- Environmental flooding
- Overflowing sinks or baths
- Defective water storage vessels
- Leaks from a neighboring building
- Leaking pipes, such as waste or heating pipes



**Traumatic damp can occur regardless of the weather and is often limited to one area.**

# WHAT IS MOULD?

Excess condensation or structural damp issues can cause sitting water on surfaces like ceilings, walls and floors. This can lead to damage in your home, such as flaking paintwork, peeling wallpaper or black mould. Black mould can grow on any surface, but common places include windowsills, ceilings or walls. If you notice mould forming, it's important that it's treated straight away as it can spread quickly and be harmful to your health.



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## How to get rid of mould

If you only have a small amount of mould, you can probably remove it yourself with household products or mould remover. Avoid breathing in mould spores when cleaning, particularly if you have allergies or breathing issues, by wearing a mask that covers both your nose and mouth. If you have goggles and rubber gloves, wear those too, and make sure the area is well ventilated.

- Use a mix of white vinegar spray (or washing up liquid) and warm water in a spray bottle. Top tip: white vinegar is safe to use on most surfaces and will penetrate porous materials to kill mould at the roots.
- Clean the mouldy surface using a clean cloth (if using vinegar), sponge or brush (if using washing up liquid) to work the soapy solution in small circular motions.
- You may need to repeat the process a few times, rinsing and letting the area air dry between scrubs. Make sure you clean your tool between cleaning.



You can also use common household mould removers such as Mould Magic, Cillit Bang Black Mould Remover, and Astonish Mould and Mildew. Follow the manufacturer instructions to ensure you're removing the mould and not just the staining caused by the mould. It's also important to check you're using a mould remover that's appropriate for the surface or material you're treating. Remember to ventilate before spraying mould remover. You'll usually need to leave this to work, then come back and wipe it off.



**If mould returns after cleaning it away and following these tips, a structural issue may be the cause. Please contact us straight away so that we can arrange an inspection and take action to fix the problem.**

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**For machine-washable fabrics affected by mould, such as towels and clothes:**

- Take the affected pieces outdoors if possible and brush away any loose mould with a paper towel, or dry cloth.
- Add a few drops of laundry detergent to the area and rub in; then wash the pieces on the highest temperature possible for the fabric (check the label).
- It's important to air dry rather than tumble dry until you're sure the mould has been completely removed.



# HEALTHY HOME TOP TIPS

**The best way to prevent condensation is to reduce the amount of moisture produced in your home and keep it between 18 to 21 degrees and well ventilated as possible.**

**Here are some Healthy Home Top Tips to help you do this.**

- 1** Open the trickle vents on all windows to improve the ventilation in your home. These are generally found above the window pane.
- 2** When cooking or bathing stop the moist air from going around your home by shutting the internal door. Open windows in the room and turn on the extractor fan, this helps the moist air escape.
- 3** Drying clothes releases moisture, so if you have access to outside space, drying clothes outdoors helps to prevent excess moisture in your home. When using a drying rack indoors, try and use a room with an extractor fan and turn this on. Stop the moist air from going around your home by shutting the internal door. Opening a window also helps the moist air escape. A dehumidifier can also be useful in drying clothes quickly, while capturing the moisture and providing a small amount of heat to the home. Again, position the drying rack in a closed room opening the window and placing the dehumidifier next to the clothes.



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Putting lids on pans when cooking prevents excess moisture in the air (and helps save on your energy bill)

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Keeping your home heated helps to prevent condensation from forming on surfaces. We understand that with the rise in energy prices, keeping your home heated may be more difficult. Please let us know if you require any financial support. If you can, setting your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature (recommended between 18 - 21°C) will help to keep you and your home healthy

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Moving sofas and other furniture away from radiators or heaters helps the heat to travel more effectively around the rooms in your home.

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Moving large furniture 5-10cm away from external walls can help improve air circulation, reduce cold spots and prevent condensation that can lead to mould forming.

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Curtains and rugs help to keep your home warm. Ideally, curtains should stop between the edge of the windowsill and above radiators. Opening them in the morning and closing them at dusk helps to let warmth in and keep the cold out. Plus sunlight can help reduce mould growth.



For more information  
on damp & mould

**[VISIT ONGO.CO.UK/DAMP](https://www.ongo.co.uk/damp)**

To speak to us regarding damp &  
mould or if you have another query,  
you can call us on **01724 279900**,  
alternatively you can visit **[My Home](#)**