



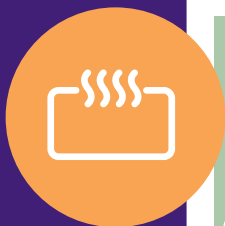
Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin  
Monaghan County Council

# Healthy Home Guide

Condensation



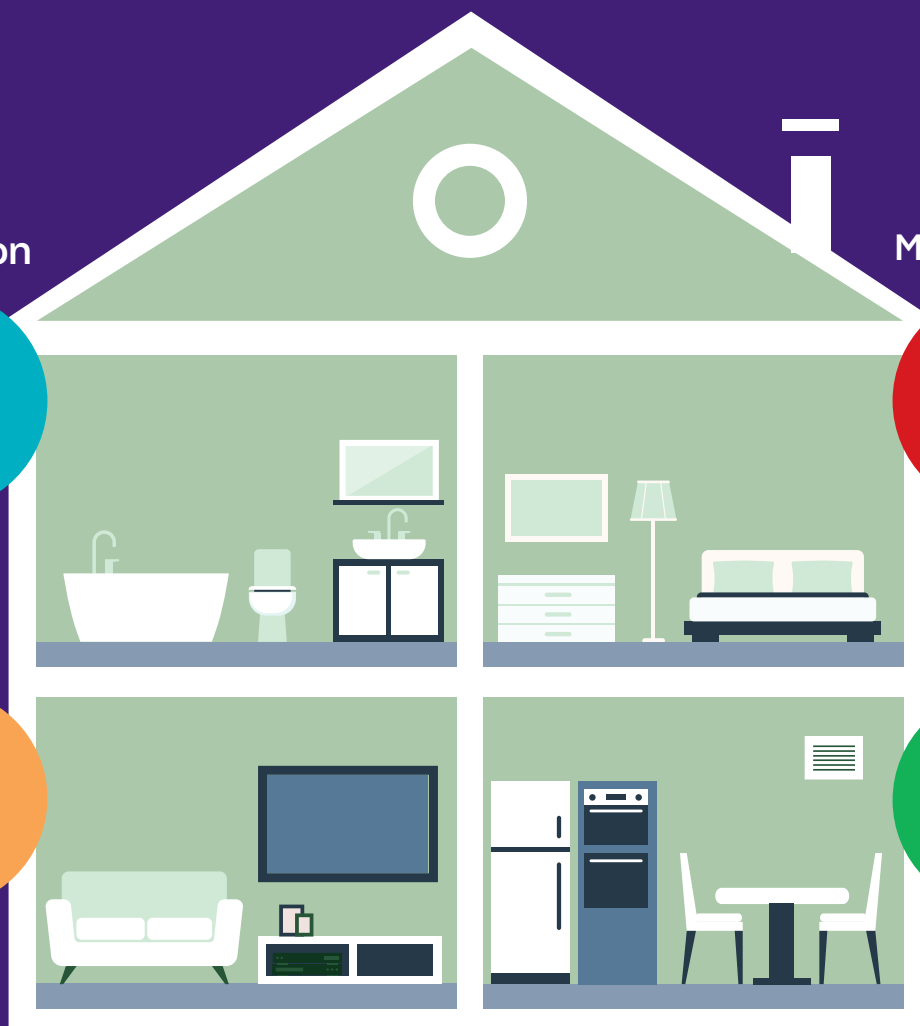
Mould + Dust



Heating



Ventilation



## Main Causes of Mould

Not Enough Heat

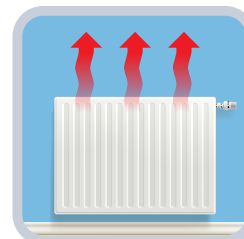
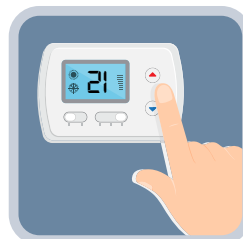
Too Much Moisture

Not Enough Ventilation



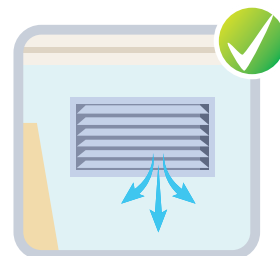
### Heat Your Home

- A constant heat at a lower temperature will keep your home warmer, cost less, and reduce the likelihood of condensation.
- Heat all rooms, even if they are not being used.
- Do not place furniture or belongings in front of radiators, as this will stop them from heating the room efficiently.
- The recommended temperature is 18°C in your bedroom and 21°C in your living room (or up to 23°C if you have young children or are a pensioner).



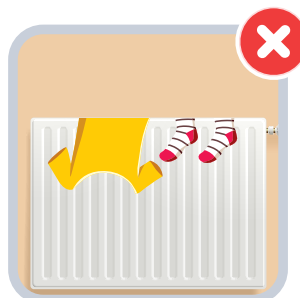
### Ventilate Well to Remove Moisture

- When a room is in use, keep a small window and/or a trickle vent open.
- Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes—do not overfill wardrobes and move them 50mm away from the surrounding wall.
- It is important to allow plenty of fresh air into your home; otherwise, the indoor air will become stale and humid, holding in pollutants leading to unhealthy conditions.
  - ▶ After you have had a bath or shower, you need to open the bathroom window until the steam has cleared.
  - ▶ When cooking, make sure that the kitchen door is closed and the extractor fan on.
  - ▶ After you have finished in the bathroom or the kitchen, leave the fan on for about 20 minutes to ensure that all damp air is cleared. Some fans switch on and off automatically according to the amount of moisture in the air.
- ▶ **Do not** block air vents
- ▶ **Do not** turn off extractor fan at the isolator switch unless it is faulty.
- ▶ **Do** open all the windows wide for a short period of time in the morning (for 10-30 minutes, on opposite sides of the house) and then close them.
- ▶ **Do not** over-ventilate by leaving your windows wide open all day in cold weather as your walls will lose all heat stored in them.



## Condensation and Moisture

- Condensation, like all other forms of dampness, makes houses difficult to heat.
- Condensation often appears in the coldest part of the room and moisture will increase where there is little or no air movement.
- Condensation can occur in locations such as:
  - ▶ Cold corners of rooms
  - ▶ Wardrobes
  - ▶ Cupboards, particularly built-in cupboards
  - ▶ Behind furniture against an outside wall
  - ▶ Cold surfaces such as mirrors and windows
  - ▶ Kitchens and bathrooms (where moist air is produced through washing, cooking, etc.)
  - ▶ Walls of unheated rooms
- Dampness caused by excessive condensation can lead to mould growth on walls, windows and furniture.
  - ▶ **Do** mop up any water that accumulates on windows and then squeeze the water down the sink. Don't let it dry off naturally, as that only leaves the water vapor to recirculate.
  - ▶ **Dry** your washing outside if possible, or hang it in the bathroom with the door closed and a window slightly open or extractor fan on.
  - ▶ **Do not** put washing on radiators.
  - ▶ Tumble dryers to be condenser type, vented outside or if heat pump type, water pipe plumbed to a drain.



### Sources of moisture

Water vapour source in an "average" house per day	Approximate water generated (in litres)
4/5 people asleep	1.5
2 people active	1.6
Cooking	2.6
Washing up	1
Washing clothes	4
Drying clothes	4.5
Bathing/showering	2.0
Pets	0.5
<b>Approximate total</b>	<b>17.7 litres</b>

### SIGNS of excessive moisture:

- ▶ Your clothing and bedding will feel cold and damp. There will be a musty smell. You will see mould growth on furniture, external walls, in cupboards, drawers, on or around windows, and on your clothing or bedding.
- ▶ It takes a long time before your heating begins to take effect, your walls stay cold to the touch, and you will not feel properly warm.

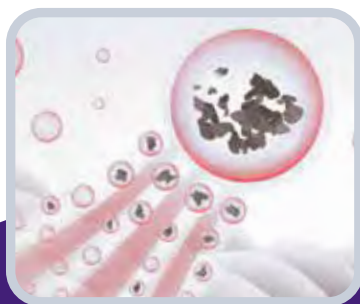


## Mould and Dust

- While mould primarily requires moisture to grow, dust acts as a food source that enables mould to thrive and spread on surfaces, here's how.
  - ▶ **Nutrient source:** dust is largely composed of organic matter such as skin cells, pet dander and fabric fibres, mould consumes this material and spreads.
  - ▶ **Ideal ecosystem:** When dust and dirt combine with moisture or damp to form mould and helps create the perfect environment for spores to germinate, grow and spread.
  - ▶ **Hidden growth:** Dust can accumulate in hidden areas behind furniture and hidden corners growing unnoticed. It can also gather on carpet, clothes and old footwear.
  - ▶ **Increased concentration:** Studies have shown that areas with high concentration of dust have 100 times more mould growth than areas without dust.

### Treatment

- If you have a small amount of mould in your home, it's often easy to remove with just a bucket of soapy water and a bit of scrubbing.
- Remove small patches of mould that may appear on surfaces using a mould-cleaning product suitable for that purpose. Wipe down the inside of windows if they become wet with condensation.
- Wipe down windows, frames, and other affected areas with a fungicidal (mould-killing) wash. Make sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo mouldy carpets.
- Removing mould as soon as it appears reduces spores in the air and can prevent further mould from forming.



**Remember: the only lasting cure for severe mould is to remove excess moisture and dust.**

