




# Tips to prevent condensation problems


## Do...

 ...keep lids on pans when cooking


 ...use extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens


 ...dry your clothes outside





 ...open the windows after a bath or a shower and close the inner door.

## Don't...

 ...block off any ventilation around the house that lets moisture out such as airbricks and trickle ventilators on windows

 ...use tumble dryers without a vent to the outside. Check that vents are fitted properly with no leaks.

 ...use paraffin or bottle gas heaters in unventilated rooms.

 ...keep the inner door open when cooking in the kitchen or bathing in the bathroom.



# Energy Factsheet 3

## Know about... condensation and its causes



For more information and advice call the  
Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre on  
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Straightforward  
Energy Advice

# What is condensation?

There is always moisture in the air and we add to it through the things we do in our everyday lives, such as cooking, washing, drying clothes and even breathing!

Warm air can hold more moisture than cold air can, so condensation is more likely to be a problem in a cold or poorly insulated home with lots of cold surfaces. It can also happen because of a lack of ventilation. These are often connected, because we tend not to ventilate rooms enough if the home is difficult to keep warm.

Condensation can cause a damp problem if it happens a lot and doesn't dry out during the day, and it encourages mould growth and an increase in the amount of dust mites.

Dust mites and mould spores can cause, or make worse, allergic reactions and respiratory (breathing) illness.

There are several other possible causes of damp in the home, such as blocked gutters, a leaky roof or rising damp. Symptoms of condensation damp are;

- there is mould growing on the damp area
- it is on the coldest surfaces
- it is in rooms with little heating and ventilation
- it gets worse in cold rather than wet weather



*"Condensation occurs when warm moist air meets a cold surface. It cools down and then deposits the moisture on the surface. The change from vapour (in the air) to liquid (on the surface) is called condensation"*

# How to avoid condensation damp

## 1) Ventilation

People breathe out moist air, so every room needs some background ventilation. It is possible to provide this while still getting rid of the most uncomfortable draughts. Modern windows have narrow ventilators at the top called trickle ventilators —these should be kept open all the time except in very severe cold weather.

## 2) Insulation

Insulating your home keeps the heat in, makes it easier to keep it warm, and can save you energy and money. Where the building is insulated, the surfaces will be warmer, and condensation is less likely to be a problem.

## 3) Heating

Condensation is best avoided by a fairly even background level of heat throughout the house. Try not to leave rooms completely unheated in very cold weather. Warm moist air from the rooms you are using will travel through to colder areas and cause condensation on cold spots such as the outer walls of unheated rooms.

## 4) Cooking and Washing

Put lids on pans if possible, and ventilate the room by opening a window or back door, or using an extractor fan. If you close the inner door at the same time you will encourage the moisture to go outside rather than into the rest of the house.

## 5) Drying clothes

Do this outside if you can, or in a tumble dryer vented to outside. If neither is possible, dry them in a well ventilated room with the inner door closed.