Keeping your home free from condensation and mould

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Condensation can cause black mould on walls, furniture, clothes and curtains. The mould looks bad and can even damage your health - medical research has found links between mould, house dust mites and illnesses of the throat and lungs. The damp left by condensation will also damage plasterwork and timber windows.

What is condensation and what causes it?

Everyday things like cooking, washing, bathing and even breathing cause moisture, which is released into the air. The air can only hold a certain amount of water vapour - the warmer it is, the more it can hold. If this is cooled by contact with a cold surface such as mirror, a window or even a wall, the water vapour will turn into droplets of water - condensation. This is what happens when the mirrors mists up in the bathroom.

What does condensation look like?
 Condensation can lead to mould growth on walls and ceilings and can also lead to damp patches. You will see condensation as water droplets on walls, window glass, around windows and in corners of rooms.

How to prevent condensation
As part of your tenancy it is your responsibility to prevent condensation in your home. These simple steps well help you.
Produce less moisture in your home:
Cover pots and pans when cooking
Don't leave the kettle boiling
Dry washing outdoors if possible
If drying wet washing indoors put it in the bathroom with the door
        closed and windows left open
Do not dry wet clothes on the radiators
Vent tumble driers outside
Do not use bottled gas heaters in your home
Remove moisture from your home:
• Keep trickle ventilators open when someone is in the room
• Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom when in use by opening the
        windows

- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when in use. This will help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms which are often colder and more likely to get condensation
- Avoid putting too many things in your cupboards and wardrobes as this stops air circulating
- Use extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom if you have them
- Do not block off any air vents in your home
- Wipe excess condensation off windows and surfaces with a towel each morning
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Is it condensation?

Condensation isn't the only cause of damp. It can also come from:
- Leaking pipes and waste overflows
- Rain seeping through the roof where tiles or slates are missing
- Overflow from blocked gutters penetrating around window frames or leaking through cracked pipes
- Rising damp due to a defective damp-course or because there is no damp-course

These causes of damp often leave 'tide marks'.

How to remove mould

A build up of condensation in your home leads to damp which then turns into mould. To remove mould:
- Wipe mould off immediately with water using a sponge or cloth
- Do not use washing up liquid
- Apply diluted bleach solution to the wall or use recommended products/mould removal available from DIY stores. (Read all instructions carefully before use and also wear rubber gloves)
- Dry clean clothes and shampoo carpets affected by mould
- DO NOT simply paint over mould. Properly clean/remove it first then use a special fungicidal paint to help prevent it recurring

The only lasting way of avoiding mould is to eliminate dampness!