



## Prevent mould from coming back

### 1. Insulation

The first step in creating a healthier home is to ensure it is well insulated. Being well insulated will keep your home warmer, drier, healthier and more energy efficient therefore helping you to save money when heating it.

The World Health Organisation research shows that if you can keep the temperature in the home close to 18 C you are less likely to catch colds and suffer from respiratory illness such as bronchitis and asthma. Insulation will help in the effort to maintain a constant temperature by helping to retain the heat for longer periods.

### 2. Heating

Heating is the next thing your house needs. Although insulation will help to trap the heat in, you also need to have a heating solution that is sufficient and affordable to run in your home.

Combine a good heating source with insulation and your home temperatures will become more consistent helping to reduce dampness and condensation.

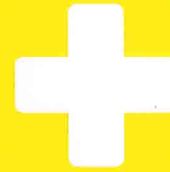
### 3. Ventilation

Ventilation or air movement is the next thing to consider. All homes need ventilation, however there are a number of ways to achieve this and an expensive home mechanical ventilation system is not always needed. Ventilation can be easily achieved by opening windows and doors regularly.

## Who to contact

- Contact your family doctor if you think that you have a health problem that is caused by mould
- It is important that tenants inform landlords of any mould problems, in addition tenants should follow advice on page 3
- Visit the EECA website [www.eeca.govt.nz](http://www.eeca.govt.nz)
- See the white pages under 'cleaners – commercial and domestic' for a list of business that do mould removal
- Work and Income may be able to help with the extra costs you may have see your cases manager, visit <http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/> or ring 0800 559 009
- Contact your local council for further information

\* This information is a guide only, and may not be accurate for all situations. It should not be used for legal or other expert advice



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## Mould in our homes

### How does living in a cold, damp home affect health?

**Living in a cold, damp and mouldy house can affect well-being and worsen underlying health conditions like asthma.**

Inhaling and/or touching mould can irritate eyes, skin, nose, throat and lungs. This may cause hay fever-type symptoms such as sneezing, running nose, red eyes and skin rashes.

Cold weather can cause mild hypothermia, which increases the risk of some illness - including heart attacks, strokes and respiratory disease - and the likelihood of falls.

### Who is at risk?

**Some people are more at risk of becoming ill living in cold, damp houses:**

- + **Older age** - especially people who are over 75 years old
- + **Chronic and severe illness** - including heart conditions, allergies, respiratory problems, asthma and COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease).
- + **Young age** - particularly children with respiratory problems, such as asthma

## Key reasons for unhealthy homes...

- + Cold rooms (under 18°C)
- + Damp including condensation,
- + Mould and fungal growth
- + Bottled gas heaters
- + No curtains
- + Overcrowding

## Identify the problem

Mould only grows when there is too much moisture. When mould appears, the first task is to try and establish where the moisture is coming from.

### Common sources of moisture

### Options to reduce moisture

Steam from showers and cooking	Keep windows slightly open and install extractor fans
Wet clothes drying inside or clothes dryers that are not vented to the outside	Dry clothes outside rather than inside
Plumbing and building leaks including over flow from gutters	Fix leaks and seepage. Check gutters regularly
Use of bottled gas heaters	Explore other heating options
Condensation on windows and window sills	Wipe away excessive moisture build up on windows and doors everyday
Damp behind beds and furniture	Move items of furniture away from the wall slightly so that the air can pass through

If you suspect mould is caused by sewage or a large structural issue seek professional advice from a plumber or builder.

## Smart Tips

### 1. Heat your home well

By setting your heating to the right temperature (between 18-21°C) you can still keep your home warm and lower your bills. It is also important to keep your sleeping area warm at night.

### 2. Curtains

Make sure you open curtains during the day to let sunlight in. It is a good idea to close them in the late afternoon to capture the warmth in your house.

### 3. Check underneath your house

It is important to make sure that the area underneath your house is free from rubbish and plants to allow good circulation of air. Also consider covering the soil under your house with heavy black plastic to prevent damp and moisture coming up through the floor boards.

## Removing mould

If you have a small amount (less than 1 metre x 1 metre) of mould and feel comfortable to remove it yourself, follow these steps:

### 1. Protect yourself

Wear protective clothing including:

- Disposable rubber gloves
- Goggles
- Mask
- Long sleeve shirts and pants

### 2. Remove mould

- Throw away any carpet, ceiling tiles, curtains that have large amounts of mould on it. Seal these in a plastic bag before throwing away with other rubbish.
- Spray the affected area with undiluted white vinegar. You can buy the vinegar from the supermarket and find spray bottles in shops selling plastic goods and in discount shops. After spraying the area wait a few days then wipe or clean the area with a brush. Use your usual cleaning product or detergent.
- Another option is to add 1.5 cups of household bleach (e.g. Janola) to 4 litres of cold water. Apply the solution to the affected area and leave for ten minutes and then rinse completely with hot water.

### 3. Clean the room

After mould removal, all surfaces in the room should be thoroughly cleaned either by wet wiping or by vacuum cleaning preferably to remove the spores that have spread during mould removal.

### 4. Regular cleaning

Including dusting is important to prevent re-growth of mould.

**IMPORTANT:** if you have existing respiratory condition like asthma, COPD or bronchitis and/or you have large areas of mould in your house seek professional advice to remove mould. See back page for details.