

A guide to treating mould growth

It's always unsettling when you find mould growth in your home, and it's understandable to think there is something wrong.

However, a majority of mould issues come from a build-up of moisture, which is often caused just by living in your home. Millions of homes across the country experience mould issues, but there are easy steps we can all take to help tackle the problem.



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What causes mould growth?

As we go about our daily activities, such as cooking, cleaning and washing, we release moisture into the air. This moisture builds up against cold surfaces and forms water droplets – also known as condensation. This can lead to mould growth if left untreated.

Condensation can form on windows, doors and exterior walls, especially in older homes that were built using different methods to modern homes.

In order to help reduce condensation and lower the likelihood of mould growth there are a number of simple measures we can take, including:



Ensuring you heat your property at a low level through the day, as this helps stop the water condensing



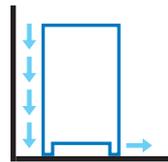
Put lids on your pans when cooking to trap escaping steam



Ensuring any vents are open and correctly fitted, and use extractor fans when cooking and washing



Try to reduce the length of time spent in baths and showers and make sure the bathroom door is closed



Try to leave space around furniture to create airflow



Make sure tumble dryers vent outside, either through an open window or fitted extractor vent



Properly ventilate your property (including cupboards), by opening windows and doors throughout the day



When possible, dry clothes outside rather than on radiators



Wipe down around your windows regularly with a dry towel to remove moisture



Don't put wet items into closed cupboards, let them dry before putting them away

Treating mould build up

It's important to act fast if you start to notice mould growth, as it's easier to remove the earlier it's treated. Here is a simple guide to treating mould build up.



1. Mix a solution of standard household bleach and water, or you can pick up a cheap bleach spray from most supermarkets



2. Wipe down the affected area with your bleach solution as soon as mould starts to form. This will remove the mould easily and protect the surface from repeat growth for a while



3. Keep an eye on the area and repeat clean down if you notice spores starting to grow back



4. Use a specialised mould-killing product on more stubborn build-ups. You can pick these up in most supermarkets. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label



5. When decorating (especially in kitchen and bathrooms) use the correct paint (usually labelled as 'kitchen and bathroom paint'. These have additional mould resistance properties



6. As with all cleaning products, please use them carefully and follow safety instructions on the label



DID YOU KNOW:
The average adult breathes out 2.5kg of water vapour per day - equivalent to roughly 10 cups of tea

Persistent mould problems

Condensation forms on the coldest part of our homes, which is why we see it most often on and around windows.

Due to the way some of our older homes were first built, some have cold spots which is where mould will most likely form. These cold spots are often around windows, balconies, and in the corners where outside walls and ceilings meet.

In some cases it may be possible for us to carry out improvement works to help tackle the issue, such as installing new loft insulation. However, this isn't possible in many of our homes, and it may be necessary to wash down the walls regularly during the coldest months.

Other causes of mould build up

In some instances, a leaking pipe, gutter, downpipe, or a crack opening in the building can also cause mould to build up. In these instances, finding and fixing the leak will solve the problem.

When you report a mould issue, our surveyors will carry out a thorough check of your home to see if there are any leaks that are causing issues. If we find anything, we will act quickly to ensure these are resolved.

Occasionally, leaks can cause damage to multiple properties, so it is important to report suspected leaks to us as soon as possible. Please also note that expected repair times can vary when multiple properties are affected.

Contact

Repair helpline – **01708 434000**

Mould web page – **www.havering.gov.uk/mould**



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