



Home
Performance
Advisor™

Empowering New Zealanders with informed
advice to help create warm, healthy homes



Beacon

Managing mould

The key principles to understanding mould in our homes

1. Mould needs moisture to grow.
 - *Drying out our homes helps to reduce mould.*
 - *Mould occurs naturally in the air - all it needs to grow in our homes is moisture and some food (dust will do!)*
2. Mould in our homes is bad.
 - *Mould is linked to poor health, particularly respiratory problems.*
3. Mould needs to be cleaned off all surfaces in our homes.
 - *Cleaning means physically removing mould and what it is growing on by rubbing and scrubbing with warm soapy water.*
 - *Small patches of mould turn into large patches quickly. Clean mould as soon as you see it.*
4. Sometimes cleaning is not enough - for example, if the mouldy area is big or mould is embedded in material you can't easily scrub.
 - *You might need professional help to manage extensive mould infestations (e.g. to replace parts of mouldy walls or ceilings) or you may have to completely replace mouldy curtains and carpets.*

Action: Dry your house

Our homes are damp for lots of reasons: find where the moisture comes from and stop it coming in or get it out.

- Find and fix leaks - check your roof, walls, under the floor, plumbing pipes under sink etc. Mould is your guide: for example, if there is mould on the ceiling, start by checking the roof for leaks.
- Get steam out - showers, baths and cooking make lots of steam. Install an extractor fan that vents to the outside in kitchen and bathrooms. Always use the fan and open windows to clear steam from the room. Don't let steam make other rooms damp - close kitchen/bathroom doors until steam has cleared.
- Dry washing outside - a load of washing dried inside can release up to 5 litres of water into a room.
- Don't use unflued gas heaters - 1 litre of water is released every hour of use.
- Air out your home - living and breathing puts moisture in the house. The best way is a 10-15 minute "burnt toast blast", i.e. open lots of doors and windows. This releases damp air, bringing in fresher air that is drier (and easier to heat). It is good to do this in the morning and repeat when you see moisture building up.
- Remove condensation from windows and windowsills - dry it off daily with a cloth (make sure you dry the cloth outside). Insulation and heating can help reduce moisture on windows by making your house warmer – moisture will stay in the air rather than settling on cold surfaces.

Action: Clean all mould as soon as you see it

This is a very active job with four steps (check your home and repeat these steps every time mould appears).

1. Protect yourself	<p>Wear gloves, a mask and eye protection. Wash your clothes afterwards. If you have allergies or asthma, ask someone else to do this cleaning. Open windows and doors while you clean so the room is well ventilated.</p> <p>Warm soapy water is the cheapest and least toxic cleaning solution. Strong chemicals like bleach take the colour out making the mould invisible but leaving some mould alive.</p>
2. Scrub	<p>You need to remove all mould and what it is growing on. Scrub hard with an old toothbrush, scrubbing brush or cloth to get all mould off the surface. Clean your brushes and cloths well or throw them out.</p>
3. Rinse	<p>You want to make sure no mould is still left so flush the cleaned area with water or rinse with fresh damp cloths.</p>
4. Dry	<p>Dry the area off with dry clean cloths. Try to keep it dry from now on.</p>

For mould on fabric (e.g. bedding, curtains), either wash and dry thoroughly, take to dry cleaners, or throw out. Read manufacturer's instructions.

Action: Seek professional help

- If the mouldy area is too big for home cleaning (more than a square metre), you (or your landlord) need to contact a professional cleaner (search the yellow pages/internet to find help in your area).
- Mould can occur on parts of our home that we can't clean effectively and the only solution is to remove and replace mouldy areas. For example, mouldy sections of wall, floor or ceiling that can't be scrubbed may need a building professional to cut out the mouldy rotten bit, stop moisture coming in (e.g. fix leaks), and replace.
- If you are doing all you can to dry your house and remove mould but can't get on top of moisture and/or mould, then you might need expert 'whole of house' advice. Seek an Eco-Design Advisor or a certified Home Performance Advisor in your area.

<http://ecodesignadvisor.org.nz/contact-us/>

http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/find_a_home_performance_advisor

This advice sheet was collated by The Home Performance Advisor Training Programme. It draws on research by Beacon Pathway and BRANZ, and best practice mould remediation advice from New Zealand and Australian researchers. It reflects advice given in New Zealand by Eco-Design Advisors and certified Home Performance Advisors.

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Home Performance Advisor Training Programme: http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/further-research/article/home_performance_advisor_training

Eco-Design Advisor Network: <http://ecodesignadvisor.org.nz/reducing-moisture-condensation/>