



## How to get rid of damp and mould in your home?

18 % of Flemish households deal with damp and mould problems<sup>1</sup>. Damp and mould do not just ruin the comfort of your home; they can cause health problems as well. Finding out what causes those damp and mould problems is rarely easy. It is often a combination of:

- construction-related problems in your building
- inadequate airing and ventilation
- insufficient heating

### What is the difference between airing and ventilating a room?

Ventilating = a continuous (day and night) air freshening.

You can do this by:

- leaving a window ajar or putting a window in tilt position
- installing window vents or wall louvres in the outside walls
- opening opposite windows



Airing = opening wide a window or an outside door for a short while.

You should air a room whenever you perform activities that increase the humidity level or release harmful substances into the air.

When you:

- take a shower
- cook without running the extractor fan
- clean the house
- dry the laundry inside
- use the steam function when you iron



### What is mould?

Mould in your house can be recognised by brown to black stains on walls and ceilings, by black dots on clothes and fabric and by a musty smell. Mould can cause severe health problems if you do not remedy the situation or when you are sensitive to mould. Children are more sensitive to mould than adults.

Mould spores are everywhere all the time. Mould only thrives under specific conditions. One of these conditions is sufficient damp. If your house is too damp, mould can start growing. If you have a mould problem in your home, it is essential to tackle the damp problem!

<sup>1</sup> Tilborghs G. et al. 2009. Wonen & Gezondheid 4de ed. Brussel: Chris Vander Auwera

## What can cause damp in your home?

- Construction-related or structural problems: e.g. damp rising up from the ground, cold patches on the walls, water leaks, etc. In those cases you will need a professional to determine the cause of the damp problem and repairs to your house might often be necessary.
- Underground crawl space damp: can be caused by rising damp or damp walls, but it is often a too low temperature that causes damp to accumulate in the crawl space.
- Insufficient airing and ventilation: every day about 10 litres of water evaporate into the air in your house by cooking, doing the laundry, taking a shower, etc. When you do not sufficiently ventilate or air your house, damp will accumulate, creating favourable conditions for mould growth. Moisture due to construction works in a new-build can cause damp and mould problems as well.
- Insufficient heating.

## Damp and mould prevention tips

- Ventilate and air the room sufficiently when you take a shower, cook without running the extractor fan, clean, dry the laundry inside or use a steam iron.
- When you live in a new-build, make sure you ventilate and air the rooms sufficiently.
- At night the human body emits a lot of moisture as well: air the bedroom in the morning and ventilate at night.
- Make sure your house does not get too cold: try to keep the temperature above 15°C at the least. Lower temperatures may lead to condensation (damp walls/windows).
- Leave a gap of at least ten centimetres between the furniture and the wall so that air can circulate, preventing condensation.
- In case of construction-related problems, tackle the causes of the damp problems.

## How to remove mould in your house?

- First tackle the damp problem. Make sure that you ventilate, air and heat your home sufficiently and contact a professional in case of rising damp, cold patches on the walls or a water leak that cause damp in your house.
- Remove mould stains with a sponge, water and an all-purpose cleaner, and rinse the surface with water. Repeat the procedure if necessary. Wear gloves and a type P3 face mask.
- Air the room thoroughly while removing mould and keep doors to other rooms closed.



More information?  
[www.gezondheidenmilieu.be](http://www.gezondheidenmilieu.be)

## Please note

- If you are ill, pregnant, or if you have a respiratory condition (e.g. asthma) or a sensitivity to mould, have someone else remove the mould for you.
- Keep children away when you are removing mould.
- Mouldy curtains or other fabric should be washed as hot as possible. If the mould stains persist, you'd better replace them.
- Mouldy mattresses should be replaced as quickly as possible.