

**A damp cold house can create all kinds of problems. Mould and house dust mites grow more in cold and damp houses. Mould can cause bad health and respiratory problems. The following tips will help you to reduce dampness and create a healthier home.**

### Keep your house dry

A dry house is healthier and easier to heat. Tips for less dampness in the house:

- Cook with lids on pots
- Close the bathroom door after showering and open bathroom window
- In the morning wipe water off the inside of window sills throughout the house

### Open windows every day for 30 minutes or more

Open windows, even on cold days! – just 5 cm is enough.

- In the bedroom after you wake up
- In the kitchen while cooking
- During the day in the living areas
- Use security latches so window can be left open safely while you are away

### Clean up mould

Mould grows in damp houses and can make respiratory problems and asthma worse.

Clean up mould with vinegar and baking soda:

- Put white vinegar in a spray bottle
- Spray the mould, leave for 30 min to an hour
- Wipe clean with water with a cloth and brush
- Put baking soda on mould and spray again
- Use rubber gloves and a mask while cleaning

### Open and close curtains - Sunlight is free heating

- Open curtains as much as possible to get sunlight into the house.
- Temporarily move the netting to let light in
- Keep heat in, close the curtains when it's getting dark outside
- Get thermal or lined curtains
- If you have a Community Services Card and don't have good curtains, get a free pair of curtains through Wellington Curtain Bank: **Free phone 0508 78 78 24.**

### Dry washing outside

Drying washing inside increases dampness in the house.

- Dry washing outside as much as possible
- If you have to dry it inside, open windows
- If using a clothes drier (expensive!) open a window or door to outside, and close the door to the rest of the house. Or buy a hose to take damp are out of window.

### Heat more

It is important to stay warm. Using some more money on heating could save you on doctor bills.

- It is very important to heat children's bedrooms. The temperature should not go below 12°C.
- Don't use an unflued gas heater (portable one with an LPG bottle). They release 1 litre of moisture per hour of use and release harmful gasses.
- Get budget advice to learn where your money can be freed up to spend on heating.

### Keep heat in

With draught stripping material, door snakes and towels, you can stop draughts under doors and windows. Remember to continue opening windows and doors every day to let fresh air in and moisture out.

### Save energy and money

- Switch off appliances and lights.
- Buy energy efficient light bulbs.
- Take short showers (hot water uses a lot of energy – a 10 min shower can use 100 litres!)
- Call Sustainability Trust's **Free Home Advice 0508 78 78 24 (0508 SUSTAIN)** to get advice on how to use less energy, and also ask questions relating to waste, water and food.

