

Here are some steps you can do to ensure the water in your home remains safe:

- If your home has been lying empty for at least a week, for example, if you've been on holiday, then you should flush out your water.
- To flush out your water you need to run the water in all showers, baths, wash basins, sinks and taps continuously for at least two minutes, beginning with the sink taps. You must do both hot and cold taps.
- Make sure you flush taps and showers through at least once a week, for at least 2 minutes, especially if you do not use them regularly.
- Turn taps on slowly to minimise the chance of splashing water, as this may release water droplets into the air.
- When flushing showers, remove the shower head and lower the hose into the bath. If you're unable to remove the head, wrap it in a towel or facecloth to make sure there is no spray that you could inhale.
- Make sure you clean and descale all your taps and showerhead every three months or when there is an obvious build up. This discourages bacterial growth.

If you have any concerns about the water in your home, please contact the Association for advice.

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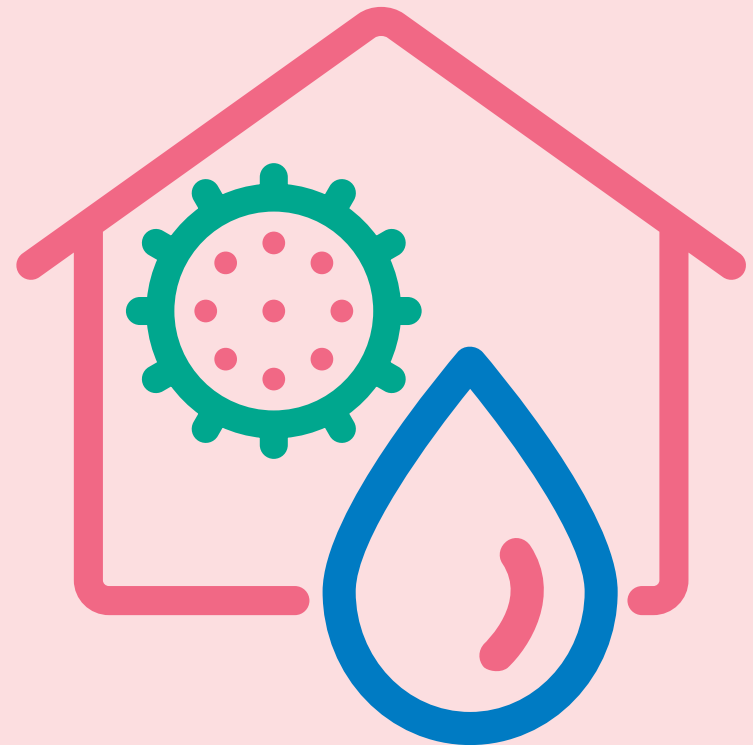


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Looking after your Home



Damp and Mould

Damp can be an issue in homes, causing problems such as mould on walls and furniture or making timber window frames rot. Damp also encourages mould and mite growth which can be the source of many health problems, including respiratory infections, asthma and allergies.

There are three main types of damp:

Penetrating damp - is damp which results from issues with the building which leads to water ingress such as leaking pipes, cracks and blocked guttering.

Rising damp - is caused by defects in the foundation of the building.

Condensation damp - is caused by an excess of moisture in the air and poor ventilation. This causes water droplets to form on cold surfaces such as windows and walls. The risk of condensation forming is increased through daily living activities such as bathing, cooking and drying clothes. This type of damp can cause mould to form on the affected surfaces.

Things you can do to help reduce damp in your home:

- Report repairs promptly, particularly damaged gutters, roof tiles, broken fans, damaged roughcast.
- Keep your home well ventilated by opening windows every day. You should also ensure that trickle or drop vents on windows are kept open at all times. This allows additional airflow around your home. If you can see condensation on your windows, it is likely to be elsewhere in your home.
- Cover pots and pans when cooking and if you have an extractor fan, use it on the highest setting when cooking. This will ensure that any excess moisture from cooking is removed. Leaving an extractor fan on for longer than when you are cooking is a good idea. If you can, you should also open the kitchen window when cooking for additional ventilation.
- Dry laundry outdoors if you can. If you must dry clothes indoors, hang them in a room with the door shut and the window open. If you use a tumble dryer, vent it to the outside or buy a DIY 'self condensing' dryer kit.

- Ventilate rooms that people use regularly, especially bedrooms. A lot of moisture is produced by breathing.
- Always use extractor fans in bathrooms when using the bath or shower.
- Open windows when they steam up to stop moisture being trapped indoors.
- Close internal kitchen and bathroom doors when steam is being produced, to stop moisture spreading to the rest of the house.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes, and avoid putting too much in them as this stops air circulating.
- Leave a small gap between furniture and walls. This allows the air to circulate away from the walls, otherwise moisture can become trapped and form as black mould in these areas.
- Do not block any air bricks or trickle vents. Chimneys should not be completely blocked but instead fitted with a ventilation grille. Blocking these areas reduces airflow and ventilation around your home.

If you are unsure then please contact us and our staff will be able to give advice and practical tips. Depending on the problem, we may also inspect your home to check for any building defects and if required, we may arrange repairs to alleviate the problem.

Water Safety

Legionella is a type of bacteria found naturally in freshwater environments and it can become a health concern if it grows and spreads in systems like showerheads, taps, hot water tanks and heaters.

People can become ill by contracting Legionnaires disease, which is a form of pneumonia, through breathing in tiny droplets of water in the air, that contain the bacteria.

The risk of catching Legionnaires disease in your home is very rare however when certain conditions exist in the home it can increase your risk. Water between 20 and 45°C is a suitable breeding ground for the bacteria to grow. This can happen in large water tanks in lofts that are not used much, or pipes that go to a tap that is hardly ever turned on.