

# Indoor Air Quality

## Protect Your Home from Indoor Pollutants

**Everyone wants to have healthy air to breathe in their homes.**

And for most of us, we will. Under normal conditions, most homes have abundant fresh air. But for an unfortunate few, high humidity can threaten the quality of the air in their homes.

Moisture must be present for mold and mildew to grow. If left unchecked, mold and mildew can rot a home's structural elements, contribute to home odors, and cause allergic reactions for residents.

If mold or mildew are present in your home, dealing with the moisture problem is necessary to prevent future growth.

### Where Excessive Moisture Lives

Our home's natural ventilation and fans do a remarkable job of venting indoor humidity. But some homes still experience excessive moisture.

How can you tell if you have moisture problems, and where can you look to find solutions?

Info Goes Here

## Moisture Control Tips:

**Moisture in the air combined with cold or poorly insulated surfaces can lead to condensation, one of the leading causes of mold and rot in the home.**

### How to Control Moisture Inside Your Home:

- Use bathroom and kitchen fans when bathing or cooking.
- Vent your clothes dryer to the outside, NOT the crawl space.
- Cover the dirt floor of your crawl space with a plastic vapor barrier.
- Do not allow automatic sprinklers to spray your home or foundation.

### Controlling Moisture from Outside Your Home:

- Grade the soil outside your home away from the foundation, where water can pool.
- Keep gutters and rain spouts clean so they drain freely. Make sure water drains away from the foundation.
- Keep vents in crawl spaces and attics unobstructed.
- Keep firewood stored outside of the home.

## Signs of Moisture:

### 5 Signs You've Got Indoor Moisture Problems:

- Rooms feel damp and/or stuffy.
- You frequently find condensation on your windows.
- You find mold, mildew, or wood rot on walls or ceilings.
- Your paint is blistering or peeling.
- You find water stains on ceilings.



# 3 Steps to Fix Moisture Problems:

## STEP 1: Deal with Moisture at the Source

Once you have discovered the source of water problems, fix any plumbing leaks or other water issues and dry completely. If humidity is a problem in your bathroom, having an exhaust fan installed or fixing a broken one is your top priority.

## STEP 2: Keep Indoor Surface Temperatures Stable

Surface temperature is a key factor in keeping indoor moisture from becoming a problem. Moisture is a normal part of indoor air, rarely damaging the home because it's usually kept warm. But when warm air comes in contact with cold surfaces, condensation can sometimes result.

### Insulate to Avoid Condensation

Insulating walls and ceilings can prevent condensation problems. You can also make sure surfaces receive proper air circulation by opening doors, moving obstructions away from walls, and opening your drapes for part of the day.

## STEP 3: Whole-Home Ventilation

The decision to use whole-house ventilation is typically motivated by concerns that natural ventilation combined with spot ventilation in kitchens and bathrooms won't provide enough fresh air.

Air sealing your home improves comfort and reduces energy waste. However, it would take considerable effort to seal these leaks to the point where moisture builds up.

If a home is in fact so air tight that moisture builds up, you can install a whole-home ventilation fan that automatically brings in fresh air. You can also check with your contractor, who can use a tool called a "Blower Door" to test your home for leakage and determine if a fan is needed to bring fresh air into your home.

**Cleaning mold from your home's surfaces should always be the first step to keeping your indoor air healthy. DO NOT attempt to paint or caulk over moldy surfaces. Refer to the EPA's "A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home" for more information.**

## Yes, You've Got a Moisture Problem. How Do You Fix it?

Homes that have moisture problems should...

1. Deal with the moisture source.
2. Stabilize surface temperatures where condensation is occurring.
3. Lastly, ensure home's ventilation is adequate and install whole-home ventilation if needed.

### Other Indoor Air Pollutants:

Moisture isn't the only concern that can affect the your home's air quality.

Radon and carbon monoxide are two odorless, colorless gases that can be dangerous to occupants. Radon is a soil gas that can migrate slowly and steadily into your home. Carbon monoxide can be a concern if you have gas or wood fired appliances that are malfunctioning or improperly vented. The US EPA website has more information on both of these topics.

For more detailed information about your indoor air quality, refer to the EPA's Indoor Air Quality website: <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/>



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