

How to reduce moisture from entering your home from the outside

Moisture can enter your home from many different external sources.

Dampness and mould are bad for your health. Damp conditions mean more colds and flu, especially for young children or older people. Mould likes to grow in houses that are damp and cold. Mould irritates asthma and allergies, and makes respiratory illnesses worse.

Here's what you can do outside your house:

A surprising amount of dampness comes from under and around your house.

- Remove any vegetation or other obstruction keeping the sun off the house.
- Remove anything blocking underfloor vents – air movement under your house will dry out the soil.
- Remove soil in contact with the cladding.
- Report any drainage, external leaks or dripping taps to your landlord if you're renting, or fix them if you are the owner.
- If you own your home, install a ground vapour barrier under your house, as it will help reduce moisture evaporation up into your home from the soil..
- Check all gutters are free of debris and downpipes are all connected.

The Healthy Home Standards

The Healthy Homes Standards for rental houses require that:

- There are intact gutters, downpipes, and drains for removal of surface, storm, and ground water.
- If there is an enclosed subfloor, a ground vapour barrier is required.

Ground moisture barrier

This is a sheet of polythene laid over the ground under the house to stop the damp rising into the house. You can install a moisture barrier yourself if you are an owner – you can find instructions at the Eco Design Advisor:

<https://www.ecodesignadvisor.org.nz/resource/s/ground-moisture-barriers-guide-installation/>

