

How to make your home less damp from the outside

Dampness comes into your home:

- from outside the house via leaks or rising up from the ground under your house

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 – a breeze under your house will dry out the soil.
- Remove soil in contact with the cladding.
- Report any drainage, leaks or dripping taps to your landlord if you're renting, or fix them if you are the owner.
- If you own your home, invest in extractor fans and ground vapour barriers.

What your house should have:

The Healthy Homes Standards for rental houses require that:

- Houses where you can get underneath the floor, should have a ground moisture barrier.

These are your landlords responsibilities.

Deadlines vary: Applies to all new and renewed tenancies in private rentals from 1 July 2021, applies to all private rentals from 1 July 2024, applies to social housing from 1 July 2023.

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/resources/ground-moisture-barriers-guide-installation/>

