

Your guide to a warm, dry and safe home

Healthy Housing Healthy You



Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora



Healthy Housing, Healthy You

He Whare Taonga - Housing Coordination Service
Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora
National Public Health Service

Level 1 Community Health Building, Hutt Hospital
PO Box 31907, Lower Hutt 5010
P: (04) 570 9002
E: GW-NPHSHealthyHomes@tewhatuora.govt.nz

www.rph.org.nz

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This guide provides information to improve the health and wellbeing of your whānau by ensuring your home is warm, dry and safe.



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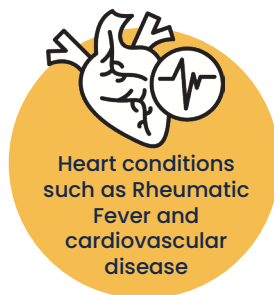


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Our homes are our shelter from the elements, and should support our health and wellbeing.

However, research shows that many homes in Aotearoa New Zealand are too cold, damp and often expensive to heat. This has a negative impact on our health and wellbeing.

Cold, damp, mouldy homes can cause and/or worsen:



It is very important that our homes are warm, dry and safe.



Heating

Is important as we spend large amounts of time in our home.

Makes your home healthier and more comfortable to live in.

Reduces the growth of mould, mildew and dust mites.



Ventilation

Maintains air quality.

Removes day-to-day moisture.

Makes your home healthier for you and your whānau.



Moisture control

Reduces the growth of mould, mildew and dust mites.

Makes your home healthier to live in.

Reduces maintenance costs.



Draught stopping

Makes your home warmer and easier to heat by reducing heated air escaping through cracks under doors and out of exposed windows and unboarded/unused open fireplaces.



Insulation

Makes your home easier and cheaper to heat.

Reduces the risk of mould and mildew growth.

Makes your home healthier and more comfortable to live in.

Heating

When it comes to creating a healthy home, heat plays an important role. Other than providing comfort, heat is essential for addressing respiratory problems, such as asthma, and maintaining overall wellbeing.



- It is recommended to heat lounge/living areas to 18°C, children's bedrooms to 20°C, and adult bedrooms to 18°C.
- Temperatures below 16°C whilst sleeping may affect your heart and lungs overnight.
- Use the temperature card and hygrometer to monitor temperatures in your home.
- Turn off heating devices once your room is at temperature to save money.
- Open your curtains during the day, let warmth in and close them just before dark to keep it cosy.



Unflued gas heaters

An unflued gas heater (or LPG cabinet heater) burns gas to produce heat and has no flue or chimney to carry the combustion products outside or away.



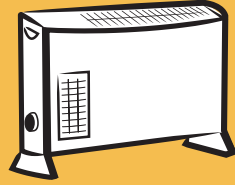
- Unflued gas heaters are banned in many countries.
- They cost twice as much to run as an electric heater for the same amount of heat.
- They release harmful gases and pollutants.
- They release 1L of water per hour into your home when they are running, causing dampness in the home.
- Never use an unflued gas heater in the room where you sleep or in a bathroom.

If you are considering buying a heater, consider one that does not produce indoor air pollution, such as:

- Fan heater
- Heat pump
- Electric convection and radiation heater

The right heater makes it easier to heat your home, and reduces the cost of heating. A heater with a thermostat and timer is best.

Finding the right heater



Fan Heaters

- ✎ Are convenient to use and cheap to buy.
- ✎ They use a lot of power, and cost a lot to run.
- ✎ Can be noisy and cause draughts in your home.



Heat Pumps

- ✎ Are a cost effective way to heat a room.
- ✎ Need to be operated as per user manual.
- ✎ Filters require monthly cleaning, especially during the winter months.
- ✎ Ideal temperature is between 18–20°C. Anything above 26°C does not heat your room any better, and will cost you more in energy use.

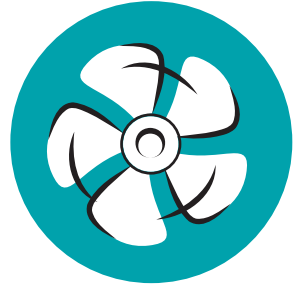


Electric Convection and Radiant Heaters (e.g. Micothermal Heaters)

- ✎ Effectively heat the air around the heater and surfaces.
- ✎ Good for heating up small rooms.
- ✎ Remember the rule: **keep items and people a metre away from the heater.**

Ventilation

Moisture can lead to dampness which can lead to housing related health issues. Daily ventilation is needed to replace damp, stale air with fresh, dry air. A ventilated home is healthier and easier to heat.



Wellington naturally has high humidity, so it is important to ventilate our homes daily.

Hygrometers are a handy tool to keep humidity and temperatures of your home within a healthy range.

He Whare Taonga can provide a hygrometer with education on their use. See our details for referral on page 15.



- Use a hygrometer to monitor the temperature and the humidity level in your home. Maintain the ideal comfort and healthy level of humidity at 40–60%.
- Keep beds and furniture away from walls, leaving a gap so air can circulate freely. Trapped air can cause condensation to form.
- Open windows for 10–20 minutes a day, twice a day to circulate fresh air (once in the morning, and once at night).
- Fresh or filtered air can also reduce your risk of catching or spreading illnesses.

Moisture control



Damp homes are unhealthy. High humidity levels mixed with low temperatures can result in mould growth, which can worsen respiratory illnesses.

Mould needs to be removed and cleaned away as soon as you see it.

Using gloves, mask and eye protection, scrub with warm soapy water using a scrubbing brush or cloth.

Ensure the area is dried well, and is kept dry following cleaning. Mould on furniture, bedding and curtains needs to be cleaned or replaced.



- Don't dry washing inside the home – 5L of water can be released from wet clothes into the home, making the home damp. Dry washing outside, or in the garage.
- Wipe any moisture or condensation off your windows and walls using a Scoopy, and towel dry afterwards.
- Use a squeegee after a shower to wipe down the walls of the shower.
- Use lids on pots and pans when cooking.
- Use a rangehood in the kitchen when cooking, and an extractor fan in the bathroom when showering. Let the fan run for a few minutes after you're done.
- If you don't have an extractor fan, open a window and close the door in the kitchen/ bathroom to let steam out.

Draught stopping



Draughts increase the chance of lower temperatures in your house, and can make it more expensive to heat the home.

Fixing draughts is an easy way to reduce heating bills and keep the home warm and dry.

- It is important to block gaps in the home to stop heat loss. Gaps with a width larger than 3mm in or around the walls, ceilings, windows, doors, and floors that let air into or out of the home will usually require blocking.
- Use window tape to block gaps in windows and doors to stop cold air getting into your home.
- Use door snakes to stop air escaping from cracks underneath the doors.



Insulation

Insulation is the best way to keep your house warm and your power bills down.



Insulation prevents heat loss through the main areas of your home, i.e. roof, floor and walls.



- Well insulated homes require less heating or cooling to maintain healthy temperatures.
- The Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority (EECA) provides advice on insulation options. Visit www.eeca.govt.nz for more information.
- The Government has subsidies available in many parts of the country to help landlords and homeowners save on ceiling and floor insulation. Call 0800 358 676 or visit www.energywise.co.nz for more information.

Curtains

Curtains are good for insulation. They reduce the amount of air exchange between a cold window and the rest of the room.



Curtains are important for keeping your home warm.

- Double-lined curtains are the best for keeping the warmth in, and keeping heating costs down.
- Open curtains in the morning to get free heat from the sun.
- Opening your curtains every day prevents mould developing on the furniture and carpets in your home.
- Close curtains at night when the sun goes down to keep the heat in and keep your home insulated.
- Preloved, high-quality curtains can be sourced from local curtain banks.



Safe homes

Keeping tamariki and whānau safe in the home is a top priority.



- Working smoke alarms save lives. Call **0800 NZ FIRE** for firefighters to visit your home and provide you with a free fire-safety inspection.
- Check your smoke alarms at least every 6 months. Daylight savings changeover is a good time to remember to do this. Visit **www.fireandemergency.nz** for more information.
- Get home ready. The Wellington region can experience earthquakes, tsunami and severe weather at any time. Get your home ready by making a household emergency plan, having essential supplies and knowing how to keep informed. Find more preparedness tips and how to help your community at **www.wremo.nz**.
- Live Stronger for Longer, Preventing Falls and Fractures – Home Safety Checklist is a helpful tool to stay safe at home. Visit **www.livestronger.org.nz** for more information.
- Call Healthline on **0800 611 11** if you need health advice. You can call Healthline day or night to speak with a Registered Nurse for free.

Useful contacts



Call 111 for emergencies	<i>Fire, Ambulance, Police</i>
Fire and Emergency (FENZ) www.fireandemergency.nz 0800 NZ FIRE (0800 693 473)	<i>Fire and emergency, smoke alarm information</i>
WREMO www.wremo.nz	<i>Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, Civil Defence</i>
Healthline 0800 611 116	<i>FREE health advice from professional healthcare providers, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week</i>
Live Strong For Longer www.livestronger.org.nz	<i>Prevent falls and fractures, keep yourself safe in and around the home</i>
He Whare Taonga www.rph.org.nz/housing	<i>Wellington region FREE Healthy Housing Service</i>
Energy Info www.energyinfonz.co.nz	<i>Solar energy information</i>
Energy Wise www.energywise.org.nz	<i>Energy Efficiency</i>
EECA www.eeca.govt.nz	<i>Energy Efficient and Conservation Authority</i>
Consumer NZ www.consumer.org.nz	<i>Heating, Heat Pumps, Ventilation Systems</i>

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