

Humidity and Your Health

Keeping your home's humidity levels in check can significantly improve the healthfulness and comfort of your home.

When it comes to feeling comfortable in your home, the old saying "it's not the heat (or cold) - it's the humidity" rings true. Other than ambient temperature, nothing affects a body's perception of comfort more than the humidity level. And there's a fairly narrow range between what is considered "too much" and "too little" of it.

Industry experts state that keeping your home's humidity between 30-60% can help reduce the effects of many unwanted conditions. Excess humidity or too little humidity can not only lead to an unhealthy home but also cause permanent damage to your home and belongings.

Too Little Humidity

- You experience chronic physical symptoms such as sore throats, dry/itchy skin, nose bleeds or sinus irritation.
- Your home's wood floors are shrinking and cracking. Joints in wood furniture are becoming loose or failing.
- Wallpaper is peeling, while your paint or plaster is starting to crack.
- Annoying and sometimes painful static shocks are common occurrences.
- Your thermostat is cranked up, as is your energy bill, but you still feel cold.
- Your piano and other musical instruments are falling out of tune.

Too Much Humidity

- Your skin often feels clammy, sweaty or sticky.
- Musty-smelling odors are invading your living space.
- Wood floors, trim or wood furniture is warping or rotting, paint is peeling.
- Condensation, frost or ice have formed on the inside surface of your windows. Water pipes are "sweating".
- Damp spots, or worse, mold and mildew, have formed on ceilings or walls.
- Your allergies or asthma have gotten worse due to the growth of mold, mildew and dust mites.
- Your house is a breeding ground for termites, cockroaches and other pests.

What You Can Do to Treat the Symptoms

- •Use ventilation fans in kitchens and bathrooms when in use. Ensure that your fans are venting directly outside.
- •Cover dirt floor crawlspaces under your house with plastic to act as a vapor barrier.
- •Check to make sure your dryer is vented to the outside. Don't dry wet clothes on drying racks in the house. Air-dry them outdoors if possible.
- •Ensure air conditioning drip pans are clean and drain lines unobstructed.
- •Fix any water leaks in pipes, toilets, showers, etc.