

8 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT

WARM DRY HOMES & HEALTH

Healthy Homes Factsheet Series
by Warmer Homes



MAJOR HEALTH CHALLENGE

New Zealand has some of the highest rates of rheumatic fever, asthma and childhood hospitalisation for respiratory illness in the developed world — conditions strongly linked to the quality of housing people live in.



MOULD LINKED WITH ASTHMA

Studies show that children who grow up in mouldy homes are much more likely to develop asthma than those in dry homes. Also, asthma developed in response to mould exposure can persist long into adulthood.



OTHER HEALTH RISKS

Sustained exposure to cold indoor temperatures is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, respiratory infections and arthritis. The body works hard to maintain core temperature, placing stress on multiple organ systems.



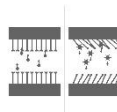
FEWER HOSPITAL VISITS

NZ research following the insulation and heating retrofits carried out under government subsidy programmes found that households receiving upgrades experienced measurable reductions in hospitalisation rates.



SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM

Research shows that children living in cold, damp homes have higher rates of absence due to illness — creating educational disadvantage on top of the health impacts. Improving housing has measurable flow-on effects for children's educational outcomes.



MUCUCILIARY ESCALATOR

Your lungs have a built-in cleaning system called the mucociliary escalator—tiny hairs (cilia) that move mucus and trapped bacteria out of your airways. Breathing cold, damp air slows these cilia down, making it much easier for viruses and bacteria to settle in your lungs.



MENTAL HEALTH

Living in a cold, damp, mouldy home is associated with higher rates of depression and anxiety. The stress of unaffordable heating bills, persistent mould and general discomfort all add to psychological distress.



AN INVESTMENT IN HEALTH

Investing in your home's warmth and dryness is a health intervention. When we consider reduced sick days, hospital visits, medication costs and long-term chronic disease risk, the economics of such investments look more favourable.

This factsheet is provided by Warmer Homes.

We hope that by reading our factsheets you will learn some useful ways to make your home warmer, drier and more comfortable to live in. Learn more at warmerhomes.nz