

did you know

## fungal growth

what is it?

Some of our customers are contacting us because they have detected grey or black jelly-like substances in the presence of water and are concerned about the quality of their water supply.

These substances are due to air borne fungal spores and are not connected with the quality of the water supply. Although these growths can look very unpleasant they are harmless and are not a risk to health.

where is it found?

Fungi like to colonise most areas and can commonly be found growing in the following locations:

- On the end of cold water taps (usually kitchen or bathroom)
- In washing machines (particularly around the powder drawer)
- In filter jug hoppers and elements
- In toilet cisterns and bowls
- In shower heads
- Around tiles in bathrooms / shower rooms
- On shower curtains or towels (often appears as spots or staining)
- In waste traps connected to sinks

how does it form?

Fungal spores are naturally present in the environment. It is only when they find themselves in a suitable warm, moist location with a source of food that the spores multiply and produce a grey or black jelly-like growth.

Water provides the moisture that these fungi need to grow and hence they are usually found growing in environments such as those listed or any area where there is standing water. Normal heating provides the warmth, and there are sufficient nutrients around in the environment to provide an adequate food source.

Growth can be extremely rapid in certain environments with plenty of nutrients present such as in a bathroom or kitchen. These rooms tend to be warmer than others in the house and are also relatively humid. In a bathroom, the propellants from aerosols, hair spray and deodorants and soap residues all provide a rich source of nutrients and can accelerate growth even further.

It is the local environmental conditions that cause fungal growths and therefore improving ventilation is the main means of minimising the problem. The more prevalent use of double-glazing has resulted in the problem becoming worse in recent years, as this eliminates any drafts and subsequently reduces ventilation.

how can I prevent fungal growth?

Fungal growths can be difficult to eliminate entirely. Improving ventilation is the best means of prevention. The actual growth can be physically removed.

To help reduce the chances of re-growth, remove any limescale as this provides a rough surface for the organisms to latch onto. Cleaning the affected area with a diluted bleach or sodium bicarbonate solution will aid the removal of these growths.

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Further information can be found on our website:  
[www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk](http://www.hartlepoolwater.co.uk)