

**keeping warm
and healthy
this winter**



Winter is here again so its time to get active ...



... eat lots of fruit and vegetables to ward off the winter flu. Have hot meals and hot drinks to keep your family warm and healthy and wrap up in layers of warm clothes to stay snug when you leave the house.



Why is it important to keep my home warm and dry?

It's important for your family's health that your house is warm and dry. Cold and damp homes are linked to poor health, especially for babies and small children, people who are ill, and older people. Here are some ways to keep your home healthy that won't break the bank.

Cover photo: St Bathans, Central Otago

How to heat your house

Only heat the room that you are in. Try and keep the temperature between 18 and 21 degrees especially if you have babies, people with illnesses, or older people living in your home.

Dress warmly for bed and make sure your bedroom is warm enough – it is very important to stay warm during the night.

Block up unused chimneys and stop draughts around doors and windows. You can make your own draught 'snakes' by stuffing rugby socks or pantyhose with newspaper or cushion filling. Up to 20 per cent of heating can be lost through draughts.

Open windows and curtains on sunny days, and close them when the sun goes down to trap heat in your home. Trim any trees that prevent the sun from entering your house (but ask your landlord first!).



How to keep your home dry

A dehumidifier costs around \$156 a year to run – these tips are cheaper and can be just as effective.

If you use an unflued gas heater (that is one without a chimney), make sure that you use it safely. Research has shown that they can release gases which can be particularly dangerous for anyone with heart disease or asthma, pregnant women, young children and older people. If you have to use one, open a window and keep all internal doors open. Use only for short periods and never in bedrooms.

Try not to dry clothes indoors as this creates moisture in the air. Drying on the line outside is free and the sunlight kills bacteria, making your clothes healthier for you and your family. Use a shed or garage if it is raining.

To reduce moisture caused by steam, always open a window when you are showering and when you are cooking on the stove top. Use pot lids to reduce the amount of steam escaping. Keep doors to bedrooms closed at these times as steam can make the beds damp.

If you must use a clothes dryer, make sure your clothes are properly spun first and leave windows open while you are using it – or even better, vent it outside.

TEN easy ways to save money and cut your electricity costs

- 1** Talk to your electricity company about which plan is best for you. Most companies provide options including direct debits at a flat rate all year round, pre-payment meters and low use rates for people who are very frugal.
- 2** Most of your electricity bill will go on hot water so use less if you can. Set your washing machine on a cold wash and rinse your dishes in cold water. Take short showers instead of baths. Showers use 60 per cent less water than baths.
- 3** Fix dripping taps. A dripping hot tap can cost \$80 a year but a washer to fix it costs less than \$1! *(see back cover)*
- 4** If your hot water cylinder is old, keep the heat in by using a hot water cylinder wrap. These are available from hardware stores. Make sure the thermostat is set to produce a temperature of 55°C at the tap (this will also prevent scalds).
- 5** Always turn the lights off in rooms when you leave them. But if you are using energy efficient light bulbs it is better to leave them on if you are returning within ten minutes.
- 6** Appliances that have a standby function (such as TVs, stereos, mobile chargers, computers or microwaves) should be turned off at the wall. This can save you up to \$75 a year.
- 7** Clothes dryers can be very expensive to run so try not to use them unless you really have to. Heated towel rails are also expensive and cost around \$120 a year to run.
- 8** Make sure there is generous air space behind the back of your fridge and try to locate it out of direct sunlight, or in a cooler room like the laundry. Don't open the fridge door too often or leave it open.

- 9** Make sure you cool food before putting it in the fridge. Turn off your second or 'drinks' fridge – this could be costing you \$190 per year.
- 10** When cooking keep the oven door closed. Always keep lids on pots and use as little water as possible to cook foods. Simmer rather than boil food and if possible use a microwave, as this uses 30-40 per cent less power than a conventional oven. Defrost food naturally if possible, (in the fridge is best) rather than in the microwave.



Insulate your home – subsidies for landlords and homeowners.

Insulation is the best way to keep your house warm and save on heating costs. The government has subsidies available in many parts of the country to help landlords and homeowners save hundreds of dollars on ceiling and floor insulation, draught stopping and hot water cylinder wraps.

The Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority offers EnergyWise Home Grants which are targeted at people with low incomes and cover all houses built before 1978. Ask your landlord whether they know about this scheme. To find out whether this scheme operates in your area phone 0800 358 676 or visit www.eeca.govt.nz and check out the EnergyWise Home Grants page.

How can Work and Income help?

Advance on Benefit

If there is something you need and you can't afford to pay for it right now, like an overdue power bill or a heater for your home, you may be able to get some of your benefit paid ahead of time. You will need to pay this back and there are conditions, so please discuss this with your case manager.

Special Needs Grant

This payment can help with urgent things that you really don't have any other way to pay for, like emergency medical care, bedding, or food bills. You won't usually have to pay this back but there are conditions so please discuss this with your case manager.

Temporary Additional Support

If you are in hardship and need help with your essential living costs, like power bills or accommodation costs, and you have no other way of meeting those costs, please talk to us. This support is time limited and has conditions.

Recoverable Assistance Payment

This is for people not receiving a main benefit. If you need something but can't afford to pay for it right now, like a heater or overdue power bill, you may be able to get this assistance. You will need to pay it back and there are conditions.

Disability Allowance

This allowance can help with extra costs that you, your partner, or child may have because of a disability. It can help pay for things like regular visits to the doctor, medicines, or extra heating for your home.

Accommodation Supplement

This payment can help you with rent, board, or the cost of owning a home. You may be able to get it if your income and cash assets are lower than a certain amount, but not if you are renting a property from Housing New Zealand.

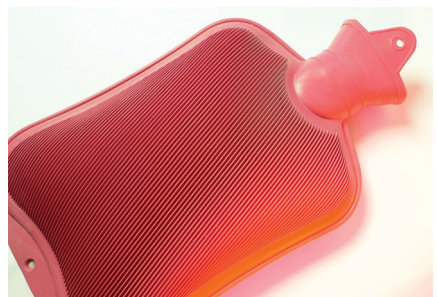
Living Alone Payment

If you are over 65 and live alone you may be able to get this payment to help with the higher costs of power and other expenses.



Work and Income
Te Hiranga Tangata

A service of the Ministry of Social Development



Cheap ways to be green and save money



Install eco friendly bulbs. These bulbs can last for many years and they use 80 per cent less power than standard light bulbs.

An **energy efficient showerhead** can use up to 50 per cent less hot water than a standard one. Consider installing one yourself, or ask your landlord if one can be fitted.

Check the **seals on your fridge** to make sure they are still working. If they stop working, warm air will enter your fridge, making it work

harder and use more power. To test your seals, put a piece of a paper in the door and close it. If the paper can easily be pulled out you may need to have the seals replaced. Do the same with your oven, as it could be losing precious heat energy whenever you cook. Companies that will replace the seals are listed in the Yellow Pages under Fridges and Freezers – Servicing, or Ovens and Stoves.

Double glazing on windows is an effective way of controlling heat loss and condensation, but can be very costly. A cheaper alternative is to buy a window insulator kit, which involves fitting plastic film to the inside of wooden windows. This can be done easily, and will make your windows 90 per cent more energy efficient. These can be purchased in the South Island from Community Energy Action, 198 Armagh St, Christchurch, info@cea.co.nz or in the North Island from Negawatt Resources info@nrl.co.nz or phone (04) 939 0313.

If you are **replacing an appliance**, try to ensure the replacement appliance is as **energy efficient** as possible. The higher initial cost will benefit you in the long run through savings made to your power bills.



How to change a washer

If you're not confident about doing this or your taps are very old or very tight, **ask your landlord for help.**

- 1** Turn off the water supply at the mains. If you are changing a washer on a hot tap, you will also need to turn off the tap under the hot water cyclinder.
- 2** Turn the tap fully on and wait until the water stops flowing.
- 3** Unscrew the tap head and lift the top of the tap away.
- 4** Throw the old washer away and insert a new one.
- 5** Refit tap head and tighten.
- 6** Turn water supply back on and when water comes through, turn the tap off.
- 7** Now inspect for drips and leaks. There should be none. Turn the tap on and off a few times to make sure it is working properly.



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