



Slime and staining

Bacteria and fungi present naturally in air, water and household dust can attach to damp surfaces and multiply to form a visible black slime or stain in various colours (black, red, pink). These growths are known as biofilms or 'microbial slime' and are most often visible in areas of the house that have a moist environment e.g. bathrooms and kitchens. If biofilms are not removed as soon as they form, they can grow into certain materials, such as tile grout and shower curtains, permanently marking them with black, pink or red stains.

Where do biofilms occur?

Biofilms can form on any surface that comes into contact with water such as:

- On the inside of cold water taps – sometimes they form grey/black jelly-like or slimy deposit that dangles from the spout of the tap
- Around the base of tap fittings
- In shower heads and on shower curtains
- On tiles in the bathroom/shower area
- In drains and plugholes
- On kitchen sink draining surfaces
- In toilet cisterns and toilet bowls
- In refrigerator drip trays
- In dehumidifiers
- In washing machines particularly around the powder drawer and rubber door seal
- Ice-making machines
- Drinks vending machines

Are biofilms harmful?

Although these biofilms can appear very unpleasant they are generally harmless and do not pose a risk to health.

What can I do to prevent growth?

Unfortunately, there is nothing we can do to the drinking water supply to prevent the growth of biofilms within customers' properties and the only way to keep on top of them is the rigorous routine cleaning of all surfaces which can be affected.

Bacteria and fungi require both water and nutrients to enable them to multiply and form a biofilm. The best way to prevent biofilm growth is to improve ventilation to allow damp areas in kitchens and bathrooms to dry rapidly. It is also important to reduce food sources for bacteria and fungi to prevent growth. Food sources can include shampoo, soap, propellant from hair spray and deodorant, washing powder, household dust and general kitchen food. Keeping areas clean and free from potential food sources will restrict growth.

In-line filters and softeners can also be affected by biofilm growth so it is important that they are serviced according to the manufacturers' instructions.

What can I do to remove growth?

Black slime associated with tap fittings can be removed by cleaning the inside of the tap or around the base of the tap with a small brush (old toothbrush) dipped in a mild solution of bleach or a sterilizing fluid such as Milton. The tap should be thoroughly flushed immediately afterwards.

If a tap has a plastic insert in it or any other detachable fitting attached to it, the fitting should be regularly removed, cleaned and disinfected. When purchasing taps it is a good idea to look for designs that do not have plastic inserts as these are commonly associated with the growth of biofilms/bacteria and are difficult to keep clean. If your house has a hot water cylinder fed from a storage tank in the loft, it is also advisable to buy separate hot and cold taps or a bi-flow tap (where the hot and cold flows are kept separate) in order to prevent your cold drinking water being potentially contaminated by the hot water supply.

Mixer taps where the hot and cold water blend together are only suitable for properties with combi boilers.

Kitchen surfaces can be wiped with a household cleaner or mild bleach solution that will kill the bacteria and fungal spores. The regular use of a proprietary mould and mildew cleaner in bathrooms (as directed by the manufacturer) is also particularly effective in killing bacteria and removing biofilms.

If growths are not removed on a regular basis they can grow into shower grouts, silicone sealants, shower curtains and rubber materials and permanently stain them.

Need more information or advice?



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You can also visit the Drinking Water Inspectorate website at dwi.gov.uk



Llysnafedd a staenio

Mae bacteria a ffyngau sy'n bresennol yn naturiol yn yr awyr, dŵr ac mewn llwch cartrefi'n gallu glynu wrth arwynebau llaith a lluosï i greu llysnafedd du neu staen o amryw liwiau (du, coch, pinc). Dyma'r bioffilmiau neu 'llysnafedd microbaidd' a welir mewn ceginau ac ystafelloedd ymolchi. Os na waredir y bioffilmiau hyn yn syth maent yn gallu tyfu o fewn rhai deunyddiau fel growt teils a chyrpens cawodydd, gan ddod yn nodweddion parhaol anodd eu dileu.

Ble fydd bioffilmiau yn ymddangos?

Mae bioffilmiau yn gallu ffurfio ar unrhyw arwyneb sy'n dod i gysylltiad â dŵr, megis:

- tu fewn tapiâu dŵr oer – weithiau byddant yn ffurfio llysnafedd llwyd/du yn hongian o'r tap
- o amgylch ffitiadau tapiâu
- taenellwyr & cyrtens cawodydd
- teils ystafell ymolchi/cawodydd
- draenïau a sincïau
- arwynebau sincïau ceginau
- sestonau a basnau toiledau
- hambyrddau diferion oergelloedd
- dadleithyddion
- peiriannau golchi, ger y blwch powdr a sêl rwber y drws
- peiriannau creu rhew
- peiriannau diodydd

Ydy bioffilmiau yn niweidiol?

Er eu bod yn edrych yn salw, yn gyffredinol maent yn ddiniwed a ddim yn fygythiad i iechyd.

Camau i atal tyfiant?

Yn anffodus, nid oes unrhyw beth gallwn wneud i'r cyflenwad dŵr yfed i rwystro tyfiant bioffilmiau o fewn adeiladau cwsmeriaid. Yr unig ffordd o'u taelo yw glanhau pob arwyneb o dan fygythiad yn rheolaidd.

Mae bacteria a ffyngau angen dŵr a bwyd er mwyn tyfu a lluosï. Y ffordd orau o atal tyfiant yw mesurau awyru er mwyn helpu mannau llaith mewn ceginau ac ystafelloedd ymolchi i sychu'n gyflym. Yn ogystal, mae'n bwysig isafu ffynonellau bwyd bacteria a ffyngau. Mae eu 'bwyd' yn gallu cynnwys siampw, sebon, chwistrell gwallt, diaroglyddion, powdr golchi, llwch a bwyd cegin yn gyffredinol. Bydd cadw mannau'n lân ac yn rhydd o ddarpar ffynonellau bwyd yn helpu i atal tyfiant.

Mae ffilteri llinell a meddolyddion yn gallu cymell tyfiant bioffilmiau. Os yn defnyddio ffilteri llinell a meddolyddion, bydd yn bwysig eu cynnal yn unol â chyfarwyddiadau'r gweithgynhyrchydd.

Mesurau i waredu tyfiant?

Gellir gwaredu llysnafedd ar ffitiadau tap wrth lanhau tu fewn y tap neu o amgylch sylfaen y tap gyda brws bach (hen frws dannedd) ac ychydig o hylif cannu neu ddiheintio megis Milton. Cofiwch rinsio'r tap yn drylwyr wedyn.

Os byd gorchudd plastic neu ffitiad symudol arall ar eich tapiâu, dylech eu tynnu a glanhau yn rheolaidd. Wrth brynu tapiâu bydd yn werth edrych am rai heb ategolion plastig oherwydd maent yn gallu hwyluso tyfiant bioffilmiau / bacteria ac yn anodd eu cadw'n lân. Os oes tanc dŵr poeth sy'n derbyn dŵr o stôr yn eich croglofft, bydd hefyd yn werth prynu tapiâu dŵr poeth ac oer ar wahân, neu dap sy'n cadw'r llifoedd poeth ac oer ar wahân er mwyn atal halogiad dŵr yfed gan y cyflenwad dŵr poeth. Mae tapiâu poeth/oer yn addas ar gyfer bwyleri 'combi' yn unig.

Bydd glanhau arwynebau'r gegin gyda glanhawr cartref yn lladd sborau bacteria a ffyngau. Yn ogystal bydd defnyddio glanhawr mowldïau a llwydni mewn ystafelloedd ymolchi yn lladd bacteria a gwaredu bioffilmiau.

Os na fyddwch yn gwaredu tyfiant yn rheolaidd, gall ddatblygu o fewn growtiau a chyrpens cawodydd, a deunyddiau silicôn a rwber, gan eu staenio'n barhaol.

Angen cyngor neu wybodaeth?



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