

## Understanding HUMIDITY in Your Home

**W**ater is an important part of our lives. It covers 70% of the Earth's surface and makes up most of our body weight. Water exists underground, as mountain snow, as glacial ice, as clouds above us and so much more. What we rarely consider is that there is also water in the air all around us. This water, in the form of vapor, is called humidity and while too little is bad for our health too much can be bad as well.

### Discovering Water Vapor

The most common measure of humidity is relative humidity (RH). Relative humidity measures the amount of water vapor in the air compared to the maximum amount of water that could be suspended in the air at that temperature. RH is always expressed as a percentage. At 100% relative humidity, air can hold no more water vapor

at that temperature. At 50% RH, the air is holding half the amount of water vapor that it could suspend at that temperature.

You should try to keep humidity levels in your home between 30-50% RH for optimal comfort and health. If humidity is too low, say below 20%, your skin, eyes and

*See "Understanding HUMIDITY" on next page*



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hair will feel dry and uncomfortable. Certain materials like leather and wood will also begin to dry out.

High humidity- 60% or above- for extended periods can cause many problems including health issues and damage to structural materials. If relative humidity remains above 60% for very long, there is an increased potential for mold on wood, drywall and other interior surfaces.

Signs of high humidity are: a sticky or clammy feeling; wood floors that are "cupped"; sticking doors; condensation on windows, air conditioning vents or walls; musty odors and mold growth on interior surfaces and furnishings.

### The Causes of High Humidity

High humidity can be a sign that there is a leak in the structure, or problems with the air conditioning and ventilation system, building envelope or foundation issues. If you have a basement or crawlspace, a damp musty odor is an indication that there may

be moisture or humidity problems. Musty odors are more than a nuisance. They are an indicator of wood rot, mold growth or other microbial issues. Microbes can also pose a health risk to occupants of the structure.

Warm air can hold more water vapor than cool air. This is why condensation occurs on cold surfaces. As air comes into contact with the cold surface, the air gets cooler, and the RH increases. If the surface is cold enough, RH reaches 100%. Since the air can no longer hold all of the water vapor condensation forms on the surface of the cooler material. We call this the dewpoint temperature.

If you have a basement, sunroom or unfinished area that is sometimes cooler than the rest of your house, temperature variations can lead to excessive relative humidity, condensation and all of the associated problems. In these areas it may be necessary to use a dehumidifier to control moisture in the air. Remember, if the air is damp

so is the structure. Keeping humidity under control is the first step toward preventing mold growth, extensive secondary damage and making your home a healthier place to live.

High humidity is a sure sign that something is wrong with a structure. Remember where there is odor, there is usually mold. And, mold is an extremely hazardous and frustrating consequence to deal with after water damage, especially since you need to begin mold clean up within 48 hours of the incident to prevent extensive mold growth and extensive remediation to make your home safe again.

If you suspect you have any kind of water damage from a flood, water leak, condensation, construction or foundation issues, call **ServiceFirst Restoration** today. We can help identify the problem, prevent further damage and assist you in finding the right solution.

### The Good Life



### Good Clean Funnies

**What time is it when the clock strikes 13?**

Time to get a new clock.

**What did the Dalmatian say after lunch?**

That hit the spot.

**Why did the little girl hit her birthday cake with a hammer?**

It was a pound cake.



A simple, satisfying main dish that the whole family will enjoy. You can use reduced-fat cheeses and sour cream, but don't use the fat-free choices.

### CINCO DE MAYO Casserole

#### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir beef in the hot skillet until browned and crumbly, 5 to 7 minutes; drain and discard grease. Transfer ground beef to a 9x13-inch casserole dish.

Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat; cook and stir onion and garlic in the hot oil until onion is translucent, about 10 minutes. Spoon onion mixture over ground beef.

Mix tomatoes with green chile peppers, salsa, corn, sour cream, 1 cup Cheddar cheese, salt, and black pepper into ground beef mixture; top with remaining 2 cups Cheddar cheese.

Bake in the preheated oven until cooked through and cheese is melted, about 45 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Recipe courtesy [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

#### Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil, or as needed
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 (10 ounce) can diced tomatoes with green chile peppers (such as RO\*TEL®), drained
- 1 cup salsa, drained
- 1 (7 ounce) can Mexican-style corn, drained
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 cups shredded Cheddar cheese, divided
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper





## 5 Smart Steps to Keep Your KIDS Safe

Every eight minutes a child goes to an emergency room for medicine poisoning. Here are some smart steps to adopt safer practices to keep you family safe.

**Never leave medications out:** Never leave medications out or where they can easily be found, such as in drawers, on nightstands, in a purse, or bags. Even if the medication is for your child, never leave it in their bedroom.

**Store medicines out of reach:** Choose one storage location for all medication that is out of reach of children. This can be anywhere throughout the home that is high and out of sight.

**Use a locking container:** Even though most prescription containers have child-resistant caps, consider using Safe Rx Locking Pill Bottles to secure medications. They require a

four-digit code to open them. Simply replace the cap and mix the numbers to lock the bottle securely.

**Talk with your children:** Be honest with kids about the dangers of taking prescriptions. Stress that they are only meant for the person the doctor prescribed them for and can be harmful to anyone else.

**Dispose of unneeded medication properly:** Check if your community has a drug disposal or pharmacy take-back program. If nothing is available near you, dispose of unused medications by mixing them with an unappealing substance like dirt or cat litter before placing in the trash.

These steps will help significantly reduce the chances your child will access your medication. However, in case of emergency, call poison control immediately.

Unintentional poisoning is one of the leading causes of mortality among infants and children in the US, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Make Your DATA, and Your DOLLARS, Go Further

Wireless providers would love for you to believe that your lifestyle requires an unlimited stream of data. Think about how much of your day is spent on data-dependent activities like streaming video or music. But the fact is, all of these things can actually be done using far less, and sometimes even none, of the data from your cellular plan. If your data needs aren't really unlimited, you could save considerable money on your plan with these simple tips.

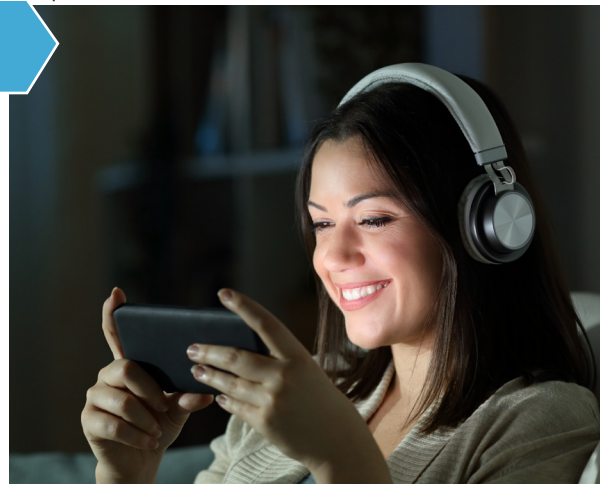
**Tame the video beast** – Watching video on your smartphone is a **data glutton**. Try connecting to Wi-Fi. It's widely available, and lets you stream without using any cellular data at all, often with a faster connection. While connected to Wi-Fi, try downloading your videos, TV shows or movies to your phone or SD card to watch anytime with no data required.

In addition, when streaming video on a small screen, you don't need high resolution. Many apps give you the ability to change video quality settings, consuming less data.

**Manage social media and streaming music** – On platforms, like Facebook, you can either disable the "Autoplay" feature, or change it so that videos will only play automatically when you're connected to Wi-Fi. This will prevent them from eating up your data.

Many popular audio streaming apps, like Spotify and Apple Music, offer ways to listen to your music without having to use a network connection, or even Wi-Fi.

**Try smaller data plans for big savings** – Follow these tips and enjoy streaming movies, listening to music and much more while keeping money in **YOUR** pocket!



While an "unlimited" plan may seem like an easy answer to your data needs, they can be more enticing than practical. You can have it all, without needing an unlimited budget to do it.



## It's a Great Time for STARGAZING



Here's something to do that costs almost nothing and carries the promise of awe: Look at the sky.

Humans have been stargazers forever, wondering in ancient times if the points of light were holes in the heavenly veil, offering a glimpse of the light of heaven. But even ancient civilizations knew the paths of the stars and were guided by the North Star (Polaris).

Today, light pollution from cities means that your yard might not be the ideal spot to watch the heavens, so you might need to pack up a blanket and some snacks, throw the kids in the car and drive to a good dark sky location. Visit [www.darksky.org/our-work/conservation/idsp/finder/](http://www.darksky.org/our-work/conservation/idsp/finder/) to look for a good spot near you.

And if you want to know when certain planets are visible, when you can catch a good meteor shower, whether the moon

is doing something spectacular or if you're just curious about what you might see, there's a tool for that, too. Visit [www.space.com/33974-best-night-sky-events.html](http://www.space.com/33974-best-night-sky-events.html) to see a calendar of night sky events and stargazing maps. The website includes handy visuals, so you know what to look for when you scan the horizon.

If you're rusty on your constellations or never took the time to learn them, there are more free tools that can help you and your family get the most out of your stargazing excursion. Download the free Star Deck constellation and astronomy flash cards. There are also a number of free apps available. Try SkyView - it's available from the Apple and Google app stores. Just be aware that with your phone lighting, your eyes might not adjust to the sky as well and you might miss the show.





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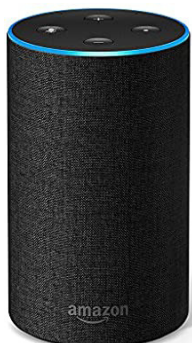
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