

**Dear Friend,**

Each month, BOWA Home Advisor provides you with important tips on how to improve and protect your home's value. We hope the following is helpful.



## How clean is your family's air?

In recent years, we've seen increased media coverage regarding the potential health risks associated with poor indoor air quality (IAQ) in homes and other buildings. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency ranks indoor air pollution among the top five environmental risks to public health, and states that levels of many airborne pollutants in your home may be 25-100 times higher than those outdoors. The problem lies in that bacteria, dust, pollen, chemicals and other pollutants are released into the air by the home's residents and contents and even daily chores, such as vacuuming and cooking. Molds, mildew and fungi are also potential problems in areas of high humidity. The good news is that your home's heating and cooling system can be an effective tool in combating these pollutants.

Treating your indoor air as it passes through the forced-air system ductwork is not a new idea. However, now there are more advanced technologies, which provide effective alternatives to the standard dust filters and humidifiers built into most furnaces. While there is not one cure all, the following solutions used in conjunction with each other may help to reduce the problems associated with poor IAQ.

**Media Filters:** New, high-efficiency media filters are a popular choice for allergy sufferers. Whereas standard fiber air filters are too porous to trap germs and other indoor contaminants, new accordion-style paper filters are very effective. Pollen can be as small as 6 microns, and media filters trap 99 percent of 6- micron and larger particles, plus about 65 percent of 1-micron particles. Interestingly, paper filters grow more effective as they fill with dust. After six months, they'll trap 82 percent of 1-micron particles. As maintenance is minimal, involving replacement one to two times per year, media filters are often preferred to electronic air cleaners that require significant, regular cleaning and

maintenance in order to sustain their efficacy rates.

**HEPA Bypass Filters:** High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) bypass filtration systems are more effective in removing respirable-size particles than any in-line home air filters currently on the market. Effective at 99.97% down to 0.3 microns, bypass systems are either attached directly to your home's forced air furnace/air handler or installed as an independent unit. The system draws air from the return ducts, which is then redirected by fan a series of filters then delivered back into your home as clean, healthy air. Most units can clean the total volume of air in an average house once each hour. Bypass systems use their own supplementary fan, leaving your furnace's air flow unaffected.

**Ultraviolet Disinfectors:** UV "C" band light inhibits the growth and reproduction of germs, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi and mold, just as the sun does outdoors with ultraviolet rays. With a UV generating lamp properly mounted on your HVAC unit, germs lurking in the return duct, on the air conditioner evaporator coils and in the drain pans are effectively reduced. While the lights last three to four years, they lose about 10 percent of their effectiveness per month, so you'll need to replace the bulbs about once a year.

**Steam Humidifiers:** Humidity has a lot to do with indoor air quality and comfort. Too much humidity can rot windows and walls and cause molds and fungi to grow creating a health concern. Conversely, too little humidity may cause skin and respiratory systems to dry out, woodwork to crack and your heating system to operate less efficiently. Steam humidifiers are the latest in humidifier technology and the best option for maximum protection from dryness in your home, especially for larger homes. Whereas traditional flow-through humidifiers are controlled by your heating and cooling system, steam humidifiers let you control the humidity independently, so you can add needed moisture to your home without turning up the heat.

Whether or not you choose to add these solutions to your home, you can benefit from properly maintaining your HVAC system. At least twice per year, you should have your HVAC system thoroughly inspected and cleaned by a professional. BOWA's Customer Service Team can assist with this important task or provide additional information on advanced air-cleaning solutions.

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If you would like more information on this topic or if there are other ways we can be of service, please contact [BOWA Builders](#).

Regards.

*Kathy*

Kathy Kelly  
BOWA Builders, Inc.  
[kathyk@bowa.com](mailto:kathyk@bowa.com)  
phone: (703) 734-9050  
[www.bowa.com](http://www.bowa.com)

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