

**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.



Custom Home  
McLean, VA

## Do you know the warning signs?

Molds are part of the natural environment. Outdoors, molds play a part in nature by breaking down dead organic matter, such as fallen leaves and dead trees. Indoors, however, mold growth should be avoided as it may lead to health and structural issues if left untreated.

Mold spores colonize and live in moisture-rich places. Bathrooms, laundry rooms, kitchens and basements are among the common targets for mold growth. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends regular investigation, not testing, as the key to identifying or avoiding potential mold problems. Using your eyes to identify leaks, signs of excess moisture and mold growth, and using your nose to locate the source of suspicious odors are usually your best lines of defense.

When investigating your home, pay particular attention to:

- **Water/Pipe Leaks:** Water and pipe leaks are common culprits, since they provide plenty of moisture, and are often undetected for days, months, or even years if minor enough.
- **Areas of Flooding:** Mold problems are very common after flooding for obvious reasons.
- **Leaky Roof:** If you suspect a leaky roof, check in the attic for signs of water damage or mold growth. Also look for signs of water damage or mold growth in ceilings on the uppermost floor of the home.
- **Blocked Gutters:** Gutters that are blocked can cause water to seep into the walls or roof, and can cause water to collect at the base of the foundation.
- **Unheated Areas:** Basements, crawl spaces or other continually damp areas should be inspected.
- **Condensation or Rusting:** Condensation around pipes, windows, or walls is a sign of a leak or high humidity. Rusting on pipes and other metals is also a sign of a high humidity problem or nearby leak.

- **HVAC systems:** Inspect drain pans, filters, fiberglass liners and air diffusers.
- **Discoloration of Walls:** Yellowish, greenish, brownish or blackish stains on walls and ceilings are a sign of excessive moisture.
- **Cracked Paint, Peeling Wallpaper or Loose Drywall Tape:** By the time the paint, wallpaper or tape shows these signs, moisture has often had an opportunity to seep within the wall.
- **Warped Wood:** If wooden materials in your home have been infiltrated by enough water to actually warp, then sufficient levels of moisture are probably present to accelerate mold growth.
- **Black Growth in Bathroom Tiles:** Tile grout is porous and will allow water penetration. In addition, dirt and other grime are easily trapped in the grout. This combination creates an ideal environment for mold to thrive, but regular cleaning will keep it at bay.
- **Increased Allergy/Respiratory Symptoms:** Continuing reports of cold- and flu-like symptoms, such as congestion, coughing, upper respiratory distress and chronic headaches.
- **Mildew/Musty Odors:** Odors can often be the first or only sign of a potential mold problem, since mold commonly propagates in places not normally in view.

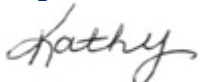
If you find leaks or signs of water damage, take steps immediately to clean up the area. It is important to dry water damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.

In many cases mold is harmless and can be cleaned with a bleach and water solution, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. However, if extensive mold is suspected, a trained professional should be consulted as even investigating can require caution if the mold spores are disturbed.

For your convenience, past issues of the *BOWA Home Advisor*, are available in the 'About Us' section of our [web site](#).

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

Regards.



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