**Care and Maintenance**

The health of a home is a lot like our own personal health. If it is regularly checked and maintained, the chances of problems arising are less. With proper maintenance, if and when problems do occur, there is less chance that they will blossom into major problems.

**Exterior**

* **Asphalt and concrete driveways:** Repair any cracks or buckling.
* **Heating and cooling:** Make sure outside unit is unobstructed. Clean unit with garden hose.
* **House exterior:** If your house is wood, check that the paint hasn't worn away so much that the primer paint is showing. If the primer also wears down, you can do damage to the wood. Brick houses should be inspected for damaged bricks or masonry.
* **Lawn and garden:** Watch for accumulation of tree limbs, branches, debris that can attract wood eating insects.
* **Roof:** Note if any shingles have fallen off or if gutters or downspouts appear clogged or damaged. You can always hire a reliable roofing company to get on the roof and take a look. Reputable roofing companies won't try to sell you a new one unless you really need it. You can simply pay them for an inspection.
* **Windows and doors:** Check caulking around doors and windows, glazing around window panes.

**Interior**

* **Air conditioning system:** Change all filters monthly or as recommended by the filter manufacturer.
* **Attic:** Check for signs of water leakage from the roof. Also look for any sign of termites or rodents. Squirrels or rats that nest in your attic can chew electrical wiring, which can lead to fires.
* **Basement:** Check for cracks in the foundation and leaks. Buildings settle over time and even after decades of having a dry basement leaks may suddenly occur.
* **Bathrooms:** Check for plumbing leaks and check grout on tiles. If the grout gets worn away water will start getting into the walls behind the bathroom, causing damage.

**Heating system:** If yours has a filter, change it annually.

* **Kitchen:** Check for leaks under and around the sink. Plumbing leaks can damage cabinetry and floors. Check and repair grout and caulking on tile countertops and around the sink. Also check wear and tear on wood floors, which periodically need to be refinished.
* **Carbon Monoxide/Smoke alarms:** Check to make sure they are working properly. Batteries need to be changed annually.
* **Water Heater:** Check for signs of leaks. Drain to remove any sediment. In areas with hard water, drain every 3 months.