

Wheels: Dennis writes, “I own a 1998 V-6 3100 Chevy Malibu and a 2005 V-6 3400 Chevy Impala. Both have Dex-Cool as the coolant. I have heard of people who have had to replace engines in Chevy trucks that use Dex-Cool as the coolant because of intake manifold gasket failures, which allowed coolant and oil to mix, causing engine failure. I had to replace this same gasket on my Malibu at 60,000 miles and was told this is a very common problem. I have heard that Dex-Cool causes the gasket to deteriorate, causing it to fail. Is this true or false? Would you recommend replacing the Dex-Cool with another type of antifreeze and replacing it more often? Would this void the factory warranty? Is there another reason for the intake gasket failures? Thank you for your reply.”

Halderman: This is a complex question. Yes, Dex-Cool can hurt plastic gaskets, but so can the expansion and contraction of two different materials used for the cylinder head and intake manifold. Which is the primary cause is open to discussion. Newer designs have addressed both issues with the plastic used in the gasket being more resistant to harm from the coolant and also to allow for slight movement to occur without fretting the gasket.

What would I do? I would keep the Dex-Cool but keep an eye out for coolant usage and have the problem repaired. Many technicians recommend switching to conventional green coolant at this time, but this should be replaced every few years. The problem is not related to the coolant as much as to the materials used in the engine.

