

Wheels: We have an e-mail from Tyler asking for advice. “I have a ’96 Suzuki Esteem GL which will soon have 60,000 miles. That is the recommended service interval for the timing belt replacement on the car. What criteria should I use to decide about other maintenance at the same time? Should I absolutely replace the water pump at the same time, or wait for the mechanic to inspect and advise on that service? Will I likely save significant bucks by going to other than a dealership for this service? I do not mind paying for quality. Thanks for your time.”

Halderman: I would recommend that normal service items be replaced along with the timing belt such as the water pump, antifreeze coolant, and accessory drive belts. Many service technicians also replace the camshaft oil seals and crankshaft oil seal as an extra precaution. An oil leak from any of these seals (on many, but not all vehicles) can cause the timing belt to fail, which could cause serious engine damage. I would suggest you shop around and ask for estimates before you have the service work performed.

