

Wheels: We have another question about a 1996 Suzuki Esteem GL which will soon have 60,000 miles on it. The reader says that is the recommended service interval for the timing belt replacement on the car. What criteria should he use to decide about other maintenance at the same time? Should he absolutely replace the water pump at the same time, or wait for the technician to inspect and advise on that service? Will he save significant bucks by going to other than dealership for this service? He does not mind paying for quality.

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.

