

Wheels: Jimmy of New Carlisle writes, “I have a two-wheel-drive, 1988 Chevrolet C-1500 pickup with a fuel-injected, 4.3 liter, V-6 engine. It has 148,000 miles on it. My problem is when I pull out kind of fast, it will stumble or hesitate for a second, and then it will be OK until the next time I pull out. What causes this problem? I put a new fuel pump in and had a tune-up performed with spark plugs, cap, rotor, wires, shaft, etc. Also, the truck pings during acceleration and at a steady speed, too.”

Halderman: I put together both of your symptoms (hesitation and pinging) and the one item that can cause both concern is a vacuum leak. The 4.3 liter, V-6 uses a throttle-body injection (TBI) and the base gasket is known to fail, especially on a high-mileage engine. To diagnose if this is the problem, purchase an aerosol can of throttle-body cleaner (formerly called carburetor cleaner) and spray around between the throttle body and the intake manifold with the engine running. If you hear the engine speed change when spraying, then the gasket is leaking and requires replacement.

