

Wheels: An e-mail from Doug says, “The engine on our 2000 Chevy Malibu V6 with 157,000 miles surges sometimes, especially when the engine is going up a slight incline with or without the AC on. It has been tuned up, water pump replaced, and I added fuel injector cleaner and started using "Top Tier" gasoline. This also happened about 2 years ago, but then our son was training to be an auto tech and he put it on the dynamometer, tuned it up, etc., and it stopped surging. We never did know why it surged the first time. Also, he did put a "device" or something in the air intake. Back then he said that would help it a little. Any suggestions would be appreciated?”

Halderman: There are several causes of the problem you described but the most likely cause is a dirty mass airflow (MAF) sensor. If dirt gets on the sensing wire, it does not react to the air entering the engine and, as a result, the computer does not inject enough fuel. Sometimes the MAF sensor can be cleaned, but most experts recommend replacement of the sensor. Other possible causes include restricted fuel injectors or a weak fuel pump. The fuel filter should also be replaced about every 30,000 miles to help prevent future problems.

