

Wheels: A reader asks, “I decided to change the fuel filter on my 1998 Jeep Cherokee with an inline six 4.0 liter engine. The parts department at the local dealer, tells me that the fuel filter is an integral part of the fuel pump, and since it is not it is not practical to drop the fuel tank to change the filter, it is not normally done until the pump starts causing problems. I can't say anything is wrong with this but I would like to hear what you think. Thanks.”

Halderman: Your vehicle, like most late models on the road today, use a return-less-type fuel system that uses a module-type fuel pump assembly. To help reduce evaporative emissions, the fuel is not returned to the fuel tank, as it was in early fuel injection systems. Now, the fuel pump, fuel filter, and fuel gauge sending unit are all in one module. The good news is that the fuel filter now lasts a lot longer and does not need to be replaced regularly, as before. The fuel filter used in a return-less system is called a single-pass filter, which means that all of the fuel the engine uses passes through the fuel filter once and the fuel is consumed by the engine. In the older systems, most of the fuel returned to the fuel tank and, therefore, passed through the filter many times, requiring that the fuel filter be replaced regularly.

