

ZD writes by e-mail: My 2003 Chevy Avalanche sometimes seems as though it's going to cut off, but when turning a corner it does indeed cut off, it is so quiet that I don't realize it until the steering wheel is hard to turn, it sometimes does it when I'm at a stop light too. I have had it put on a diagnostic machine but no codes come up and the check engine light is not on either. I was going to take it to my local Chevy dealer but they want \$90.00 per hour to check it out and with the economy the way it is I don't know if I can afford that, who knows how long they will say it took them to diagnose the problem? And that doesn't include them fixing it! Please give me your honest opinion as to what I should do”.

Halderman: Your problem could be caused by a dirty throttle plate. If the throttle plate is coated with carbon this will cause your problem and it will not set any trouble codes. What is happening is that the air passes through the intake passage around the throttle plate. Over time, this passage (throttle body) gets restricted due to the accumulation of fuel residue and carbon.

The symptoms of this restriction include:

- Rough or unstable idle
- Hesitation when first accelerating
- Stalling when coming to a stop such as a stop sign or traffic light

This is a very common service that any shop can perform for a reasonable amount.

Wheels: What is done to clean the throttle body and air inlet passage?

Halderman: There are several ways that this cleaning is done and it varies as to the type of carbon cleaning equipment that the shop or dealer uses. Some machines spray a cleaning chemical into the throttle area and run the engine at the same time. This process not only cleans the throttle plate area but the cleaner also helps clean the deposits from the intake valve. Other methods just clean the throttle plate and the air inlet area which is also very effective to cure the hesitation during acceleration as described by ZD.

