

**Wheels:** David of Centerville has a question about the spark plugs in his 1998 Dodge minivan. The owner's manual recommends replacing the spark plugs at 100,000 miles. He has 98,000 miles on his minivan and it still performs great and gets excellent fuel economy. He hesitates to do anything. What is your advice?

**Halderman:** Even though the minivan is running great now, this does not mean that it will continue to operate correctly indefinitely. I always recommend following the vehicle manufacturer's maintenance intervals. Remember, the maintenance schedule is the **maximum** time and/or mileage interval. This means that the service can be performed sooner than recommended, but not later. Service intervals are determined by the vehicle manufacturer by testing. This means that the spark plugs may last longer than 100,000 miles but after this mileage there could be a fault that can cause severe and expensive damage. If just one spark plug starts to misfire, the resulting unburned fuel can cause the catalytic converter to overheat and fail. Not only will this cause poor engine operation, but the minivan may not be able to pass the E-check emission test. Do yourself a favor – follow the manufacturer's recommended spark plug change interval and all other service intervals.

