

# Automotive Answers

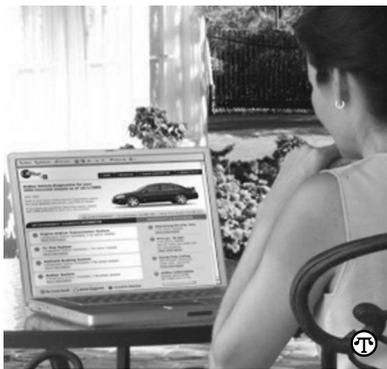
## Informed Drivers And The Internet: The Prescription For A Healthy Vehicle

(NAPSA)—For do-it-yourselfers, the Internet provides a variety of valuable and readily available information. Web sites such as WebMD, Travelocity, Kelley Blue Book, Wikipedia and Goodwrench.com receive millions of hits a month as consumers seek to discover answers on their own. This trend is particularly prevalent among automotive consumers who are completing research online for both auto sales and service.

A recent study by Compete Inc., commissioned by Google Inc., revealed that 75 percent of those who research parts and services indicate they are using the Web more today to research compared to two years ago. Additionally, 92 percent of consumers researching automotive service information online indicate the Internet influenced their purchase decision. The challenge for consumers is ensuring that the information they find on the Web is accurate before attempting to solve an issue by themselves.

“There’s nothing better than well-informed customers who accurately describe a vehicle issue or potential repair when visiting their service center for maintenance,” said Peter Lord, executive director, GM Service Operations. “Problems can occur when vehicle owners take significant repairs into their own hands, or trust them to a weekend mechanic, after getting the wrong information. Sometimes they’ve misdiagnosed the issue and end up doing more harm than good.”

For example, replacing the alternator instead of the battery



**Accurate online automotive service research can help consumers learn more about their cars.**

because a car isn’t starting correctly or holding a charge can be a pricey misdiagnosis. Hundreds of dollars could have been saved had the issue been identified correctly and repaired right the first time by a certified technician.

Web sites such as Goodwrench.com provide a variety of reliable maintenance tips. Whether the issue is major or minor, owners can bring their vehicle to their dealer for an expert diagnosis by a Goodwrench technician trained to fix all GM vehicles. The site offers a number of helpful tips and topics for vehicle owners to check and repair various parts of their vehicles. Topics include tutorials on “How Your GM Vehicle Really Works,” automotive definitions and terms, expert maintenance tips for warm- and cold-weather driving, and even insider tips for checking tire wear.

### Tires

Of all major categories of car-related parts, tires and wheels are

the most researched parts, with 41 percent of people searching for information online. Tire service also represents the most-researched car-related service. Car tires are usually a good vehicle component that drivers can easily self-diagnose. For example, new tires are needed if:

- Three or more treadwear indicators—“wear bars” that look like narrow strips of smooth rubber across the tread—can be seen;
- Cord or fabric is showing through the rubber;
- The tread or sidewall is cracked, cut or snagged deep enough to show cord or fabric;
- The tire has a bulge or split;
- The tire has a puncture, cut or other damage that can’t be repaired correctly.

To ensure tire performance, handling and durability under a variety of driving conditions, GM’s tire and wheel engineers developed industry-leading Tire Performance Criteria (TPC) specifications. Tires approved through the TPC process are stamped with a TPC spec number, so customers can go to a GM dealership or a national tire brand retail store and order a new tire specifically engineered to go with a particular vehicle.

Replacing a car’s tires with anything besides the original equipment TPC-specified tire can impact many safety and performance aspects of a vehicle, including braking, steering, cornering, ride and handling, noise and vibration, traction and even fuel economy.

For more information, visit [www.goodwrench.com](http://www.goodwrench.com).