



# ASK THE MOTOR MEDICS®

Automotive Advice from  
the Under The Hood® Show

Dear Motor Medics,

I'm having trouble listening to your car show. It's not so much you guys but rather my car. If I listen at home or in my friend's car it's loud and clear but I just can't seem to get good reception on my vehicle radio. The truck has only 60,000 miles and is a 03 Chevy. I started getting poor reception a few years ago and it has become worse. The FM reception is poor and the AM is very poor. It has kind of a popping sound that changes speed of pops as the engine changes speed. Where would I begin to fix this problem myself?

Thank you,  
Scott in Clayton New Mexico

Dear Scott,

It could be many things that won't be too hard to fix if you have some basic mechanical skills. It could also be the entire radio but let's start with checking the cheaper stuff first. A radio is only as good as its antenna so start there. Check the mast and the mounting. The antenna should be tight where it mounts to the vehicle. Check the cable as well. The cable needs to have no corrosion at any connector joint from the antenna to the radio. If all looks good try a test antenna that is not mounted to the vehicle. If it fixes the problem it is likely the antenna. If not then it is time to have some diagnostics done at the local radio repair shop.

Take care,  
the Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics,

I don't have any jumper cables in my car at this time and would like to start carrying some. You would think it would be a simple task, just going to the store and picking out a nice set but when I did I got so confused that I had to write. They have big ones and small ones and ones that go in the lighter socket. They have jumper boxes you recharge. Where do I start? Can you help me with the different kinds and what might be better for me? I have not needed to jump my vehicle ever but I park in a ramp at work and every week it seems like one of my friends needs a jump and I'm just a helping kind of person.

Thank you,  
Darryl in Martinsville Virginia

Dear Darryl,

There are a lot of choices yes, but what you choose will depend on personal preference and also how you will be using any of the items you mentioned. Heavy gauge jumper cables with large ends are good for jumping a car quickly and often. A rechargeable jump pack also works well for this. The difference is you need to get close with your vehicle to connect cables while the pack is self-contained. Very small gauge cables need more time to charge before cranking and the one for the lighter to lighter socket can take a very long time and not provide the needed cranking amperage.

Take care,  
the Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics,

With gas prices constantly changing but always on the slow creep upwards overall, I want to save as much fuel as possible. I have been researching kits to burn hydrogen in my car and other ways to increase my mileage with additives to the tank that are supposed to increase efficiency. Do you guys know which kit is the best one out there and how well they work? Is it something I can do myself at home? What about the additives to the tank?

Thank you,  
Dustin in Elmira New York

Dear Dustin,

Keep researching, and you will find many people who have tried these things only to find they don't work as promised. Everyone wants better mileage and they all want it cheaply. When the cost of fuel gets a sudden spike, you will see more of these kits on the market and offers of pills and additives claiming to be magic fixes for fuel mileage. If there was such a thing it's likely that the manufacturers would be making a really good version of it to get their overall fuel ratings up. Not to say that someone won't come up with something that does the job at a price that makes it worthwhile but for now we have not seen anything. It's completely up to you to research these products and make a final decision but we very strongly recommend that you consult with your own local mechanic before making any purchase

Take care,  
the Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics,

I just got my first car from my dad, a 2003 Chevy Impala and I was at the gas station filling it up for the second time or so and the guy next to me said I was doing it wrong and was going to wreck my car. He said I was overfilling it and need to stop when the pump clicks the first time. The problem is it clicks off when it's only half full and you must fill it really slow or keep clicking it. This is the way my dad had to fill it for the past couple years. What is this guy talking about and why does it click off so soon?

Thank you,  
Dave in Bennington Vermont

Dear Dave,

The guy is right. The tank is designed to shut off the pump by backing fuel up the filler tube when it's full. If you overfill the tank by forcing fuel into it after it shuts off it will spill over into the emissions system canister damaging it. You and your dad may not have caused what is going on now. While overfilling can cause damage to the emissions system and result in the premature shut off, a failed tank vent valve can also cause this even without canister damage. Have the emissions system checked and if it is a valve, they can replace it so you can fill the tank faster but remember to stop when it clicks.

Take care,  
the Motor Medics

Dear Motor Medics,

I recently had to have a suspension part replaced on my vehicle and I went the cheap route and found one on the internet at half of the price that my local store was offering and at that cost I could not pass it up. Being so cheap and with the free shipping I figured it made sense. The warranty was six months but I figured they would not sell them if they all went bad and at that price I could by another one if it failed. I installed it myself and 1000 miles later was left stranded missing a wheel. The car was towed and they found the part I had was very cheaply produced. I tried to call the company but they have no phone and do not respond to my emails. Is there any way to know how good a part is when purchasing one from a source other than the vehicle manufacturer?

Thank you,  
Bart in Wray Colorado

Dear Bart,

There are some great deals out there but also some very poor quality parts that can fail and compromise your safety. How can you be sure you are getting good quality parts? Buy locally. You will have a real building you can walk into and real people who will help you if you have a failure. The store will also have the backing of the reputable companies that supply their parts and you will be supporting your local economy.

Take care,  
the Motor Medics

FOR ENTERTAINMENT ONLY

Always consult your local shop and follow all safety procedures before repairs.

Come visit the Motor Medics® online @ [underthehoodshow.com](http://underthehoodshow.com)