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Rain and worn rubber don't mix

As a kid, you loved the rain. Tromping through it in your raincoat and galoshes was a lot of fun. As an adult, you're not so fond of it. Sure, it does wonders for your lawn and garden, but it makes everyday activities like driving difficult. Maneuvering your way through slick streets with rain pounding on the windshield isn't easy. Add to that scenario worn-out tires and windshield wiper blades and you can see why driving in the rain sometimes results in disaster.

Driving during a downpour is hard enough without adding worn-out tires and windshield wiper blades to the mix. Tires with thin tread don't take to the water very well. In fact, they tend to ride up on the water, losing contact with the pavement and making driving hazardous. Poor windshield wipers streak windows, impairing the field of vision even further. It is imperative that you keep these two areas of your vehicle in prime condition to deal with rainy weather.

To check the tread on your tires, insert a penny into the grooves. If you can see all of Abraham Lincoln's head, you have one of two options. You can either buy new tires and install them yourself or take your vehicle to a service center and have your tires replaced.

If you find that your windshield wipers chatter and smear your windshield, then it's time to replace them. Fortunately, this is a task that you can do yourself. Simply buy a set of wiper blades and follow these instructions:

1. Depending upon the type of vehicle you own, you may either lift the wiper arms off the windshield to replace the



blades or turn the wipers on and then shut off the ignition key when they are in a vertical position.

2. Place a soft cloth between the glass and the blades to protect the glass from scratches.

3. With a screwdriver if needed, release the tabs to remove the blades from the arms. Set them aside.

4. Insert the new blades, following the manufacturer's instructions.

5. Lower the wiper blades back to the glass and remove the cloth.

6. Test the windshield wipers to make sure they are working properly.

You should check your windshield wipers at least twice a year and replace the blades at least once a year. Most blades will not last more than six months, so don't be surprised if you have to replace them more often.

Don't let rainy days get you down. Check your tires and wiper blades periodically and replace them as needed. Keep the two in top-notch condition and take some of the danger out of driving in the rain.

—By Tresa Erickson, special

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