But tires, like other parts of an automobile, need attention if they are to perform at their best. The key, experts agree, is to prevent problems before. they occur, particularly with the hot weather and extra travel associated with the summer months.

Fortunately, tire care is simple and inexpensive, and requires as little time as a few minutes every month.

"In addition to enhancing safety and economy, proper tire maintenance promotes traction, smoothness and a quieter ride," says Russell Chick, manager, consumer products and advertising for Yokohama Tire Corporation, which supplies several original equipment and replacement tires for the U.S. market.

A little maintenance can go a long way toward ensuring a safe, confident and rewarding driving experience."

Tire maintenance is comprised of five main elements: air pressure checks, visual inspections, rotation, alignment and balancing.

The single greatest cause of tire damage is improper inflation pressure. Improperly inflated tires, which cause irregular treadwear and poor gas mileage, will sometimes "squeal" around corners at normal speeds, or feel mushy during turns.

Yokohama's Chick recommends checking air pressure at least once a month with an accurate gauge when the tires are cold. Recommended air pressures can be found in owner's manuals, or on the driver's side door jam of some vehicles.

A fire is considered seriously underinflated if it is four or more psi (pounds per square inch) below the recommended level. Generally, tires lose about one psi each month. Warmer temperatures will cause a rise in pressure of about. one psi for every 10 degrees.

- Visual inspections are important

(NC)—In view of the currently high

price of gasoline, General Motors is

reminding its customers and the car-

driving public of simple steps to

unless specified in the owner's manual

pressures. Under-inflated tires cause

vehicle drag and increase fuel

idle for more than a few minutes.

•Don't buy high octane gasoline

·Keep tires inflated to recommend

•Turn off the engine when sitting

Drive at a steady speed whenever

.Don't "ride" the brakes. Keep your_

possible. Avoid sudden stops and "jack

Don't pump the accelerator.

help save fuel and money:

for your particular vehicle.

consumption.

rabbit" starts.

AUTO

FACTS



USING YOUR HEAD — Tires, like other parts of an automobile, require frequent maintenance in order to perform at their best. Yokohama Tire Corporation suggests regular visual tire inspections to check for irregular treadwear, punctures or other outside damage, in addition to the amount of tread remaining on a tire. One effective method for checking treadwear is to place the top of a penny in the groove, and replace the tire if Queen's head is fully visible. Other maintenance tips include air pressure checks, tire rotation, alignment and balancing.

because they reveal irregular treadwear (one side may be more worn than the other), punctures or other outside damage, in addition to the amount of tread remaining on a tire.

Today's tires have small raised points of rubber in the tire's grooves that indicate when the tread depth is beyond the safe - or legal - limit, which is 1/2 of an inch. Another effective method is to place the top of a penny in the groove, and replace the tire if Queen's head is fully visible.

Tire rotation extends a tire's life by balancing out the wear variances. Treadwear can be more pronounced at

wheel positions that carry more of the yehicle's weight. Tires should be rotated every 5,000-8,000 miles, with city driving requiring the most frequent attention.

Proper wheel alignment also ensures even treadwear, and may prevent suspension damage that could occur if neglected. When a car is out of alignment - often caused by driving over potholes and on rough roads -- it slightly alters the position of the tires, causing one part of the tire to wear more quickly than the other areas.

Uneven wear also can occur if the wheel and tires are out of balance.

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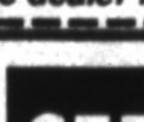
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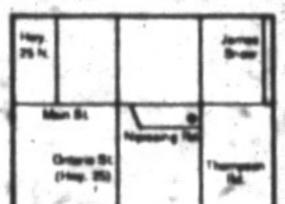
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