

What Does that Light Mean?

Top Diagnostic Gadgets for Your Car

On-board car diagnostic gadgets tap into your car's computer so that you can track performance, diagnose problems and keep your car in top condition.



Automatic™ Link (\$99.95)

The most affordable option on the market, the Automatic Link works on most gasoline engine vehicles sold in the U.S. since 1996. Simply plug it into the port near the steering wheel, and you'll have access to your engine's computer through your smartphone. The Automatic Link deciphers the code when your vehicle's check engine light goes on, and may turn off the light if the problem is something simple. If it turns out to be something more serious, the app will give you a list of nearby reputable mechanics. Additionally, it'll remind you where you parked, track your gas mileage and notify the authorities if you get into an accident. Visit automatic.com for more information.

GoPoint BT1 (\$120, for Apple)

GoPoint BT1 sends real-time information from your 1996 or newer vehicle's computer diagnostic system to your iPhone, iPad or iPod touch. It translates your car's check engine codes, measures your fuel economy and gives you cost estimates when repairs arise. It works with the following iTunes apps to give you a full overview of your car's diagnostics:

GoPoint app: Decodes and translates your check engine light.

mpgLINK: Tracks your total fuel economy.

readyLINK: Tells you if your car is ready for inspection.

CARBonga: Tests your vehicle's operating systems to make sure everything is in working order.

DashCommand OBD II: Pulls data from your car's engine control module to get all of your car's vital stats.

Visit gopointtech.com for more information.

CarMD® (\$119.85*)

CarMD is an on-board diagnostic hardware system that helps you read the codes associated with your check engine light. When this light appears, CarMD will give you the code and tell you what it means. Its Vehicle Health Report™ offers code definitions and emissions information, provides an estimate of parts and labor costs and sends service reminders to you via text or email. It also offers tips to help you extend the life of your car by reminding you of scheduled and recommended services. Visit carmd.com for more information.

*Includes CarMD handheld device, software CD, USB cable, storage case and batteries.

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5 Ways to Keep Your Vehicle Running Like New

Car repairs are expensive. However, as Benjamin Franklin once said, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Take care of your car from the beginning, and it'll run for a long time. Here are some tips:

1. **Follow the manufacturer's maintenance schedule.** Somewhere in the mass of paperwork and booklets you received when you bought your car is a maintenance schedule. It will tell you when to change your oil and when to replace other parts of your engine.
2. **Check your fluids and tire pressure.** Once a month or so, take a minute to open up the hood and check your fluids, including the oil, power steering fluid, etc. With the exception of the oil, you can see how much fluid you have with just a look at their respective reservoirs.
3. **When you hear a noise, check it out.** Hear a squealing sound when you press the brakes? There might be dust on the brake pads or you might need new ones. Either way, get it checked out right away to prevent costly repairs later.
4. **Watch your driving.** Sudden stops and starts can take a toll on your engine and cause the components to wear out sooner than expected. Go easy on the gas and brake pedals and you'll keep your engine humming and may even improve your fuel economy as well.
5. **Take care of your car.** A thorough cleaning, followed by wax, does more than make your car shine like new. It protects the paint by eliminating the dirt and grime that accumulates when you drive. Don't forget to vacuum and dust the inside of your car as well.

Safety Gadgets

Backup Camera

Although rearview visibility systems will be standard on all new vehicles by 2018, boost your vehicle's safety now with a rear-facing camera. These systems help drivers to see directly behind their vehicles, and may prevent backover crashes.



Panoramic Rearview Mirror

Panoramic rearview mirrors help to give you a better look at what's behind you and around you by eliminating blind spots. Most models clip on over your existing rear view mirror, making installation quick and easy.

LED Road Flares

LED lights shine brighter and longer than traditional road flares, like this one from Superbrightleds.com

