

Car trouble

I first noticed the problem when I first drove my car after returning from a trip to St. Louis. The day after I got home, an indicator on my dash informed me that the tailgate was open on my Honda Pilot. Fortunately, I was just leaving to take Collin to school and wasn't driving yet. I got out of the car, raised the hatch, and pushed it back down until it clicked shut. It held - for a while.

When I got to Collin's school, my car wouldn't lock with the remote. Usually it means a door isn't closed all the way. This time, it was the fifth door.

Later that day, while I was driving the boys home from school, I heard an electronic clicking and realized my tailgate was open again. I worried that my hatch would fly open, offsetting the Pilot's balance and sending us tumbling down into a ditch.

As soon as I could, I called Patrick and explained the situation. "Take it to the dealership," he said. "It should still be under warranty."



Image via Flickr Creative Commons/Brian Hoecht

As I called to make an appointment, I said a small prayer. "Please, God. Don't let it be serious." I couldn't afford to be without my vehicle. Not with three little boys and their pressing agendas. Not when it's too cold outside to walk to the mailbox, let alone anywhere else. Most of all, we needed to be safe.

I nervously waited at a nearby Mexican restaurant with my mom, who was kind enough to pick me up from the dealership while the work was done. They'd informed me that they may need to order parts, which meant I'd drive around for a week or more with a temperamental tailgate and possibly lose my car for an entire day or longer when the part finally arrived. The phone rang just as I took a monstrous chomp out of a guacamole slathered tortilla chip. Nothing could have prepared me for what I heard next.

"Well, we looked over your whole entire hatch, and nothing appears to be wrong with it."

Had I imagined it? Did I develop a tailgate-slamming compulsion based on a hallucinated light form?

"We did, however, find a piece of hard candy wedged in between a gasket. That may have been the problem."

"Candy?" I asked, aloud and in my head.

"Yes, ma'am. But, if you could come back and take a look just to make sure everything is okay..."

"I'll be right there," I told him.

My mom and I talked it over, trying to think of how a piece of candy (which I very rarely allow my boys to have, and never in my car) could have ended up in my trunk. Then, she remembered.

While we were cleaning out my car before the trip, my mom discovered a yellow piece of candy underneath of Collin's seat. She scraped it off the metal bar and didn't know where it went.

Back at the dealership, the associate addressed me in a grave tone. "Hello, Robyn," he said "I want to show you what we found." He raised the hatch, pointed out all of the inspections they'd done and pointed to the spot where they found the candy as though he were indicating a crime weapon. He described the candy as though it were a fugitive. I surmised it to be a banana Runt.

I had to laugh. So I did. Thank God it wasn't serious!