

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is a hybrid vehicle?

A hybrid uses two or more on-vehicle energy sources for propulsion to help increase fuel economy and reduce emissions. The most common hybrids use a gasoline engine and one or two electric motors powered by batteries.

2. How does the Sonata Hybrid's fuel economy compare to the regular Sonata?

The Sonata Hybrid uses Hyundai's Blue Drive technology that includes a unique set of powertrain components to achieve superior EPA fuel economy estimates of 35 MPG city/40 MPG highway. This compares to 22 MPG city/35 MPG highway for the regular Sonata with a 6-speed automatic transmission.

3. What components are unique to the Sonata Hybrid?

The Sonata Hybrid has an electric motor mounted inside the case of its standard 6-speed automatic transmission. The motor is powered by a lithium polymer battery pack—the first use of this superior type of battery technology in a production vehicle. There also is a Hybrid starter generator used to start the gasoline engine and help charge the hybrid battery. Other differences include an electrically driven air-conditioning compressor (not engine belt-driven, like conventional vehicles) and some unique vehicle instrumentation and displays.

4. How is the Sonata Hybrid different from the Toyota Prius?

The Sonata is a Parallel Hybrid, while the Prius is a Power-Split Hybrid. The main difference is that the Sonata Hybrid uses a conventional, 6-speed automatic transmission, with discernable shift points, while the Prius uses a Continuously Variable Transmission that does not provide a "shifting" feel. The Sonata Hybrid transmission includes an electric motor within its case. This ingenious packaging allows the Sonata Hybrid to operate in electric-only mode at speeds up to 74 miles per hour. The Prius Power-Split design contains two motor-generators; one powers the car in electric mode, and the other is used to balance power with the gasoline engine. This design results in a loss of overall efficiency, meaning that the Prius can travel in electric-only mode to save gasoline only at low speeds. That is why the Prius achieves better fuel economy in the city than it does on the highway.

5. How is the Sonata Hybrid different from the Honda Civic Hybrid?

The Sonata is a Parallel Hybrid. The Civic Hybrid is considered a "mild hybrid" because its electric motor cannot work on its own. Honda calls this an Integrated Motor Assist system. The Civic's electric motor is only used to assist, or boost the output of the relatively small gasoline engine. It can't run in electric-only mode.

6. How can I achieve the best fuel economy with the Sonata Hybrid?

Actual fuel economy depends on your driving style. Here are some general guidelines:

- Avoid driving at speeds that are significantly higher than posted, especially on the highway, where driving faster will reduce fuel economy.
- Accelerate gently, avoiding “jack rabbit” starts.
- Try to avoid the need for sudden, heavy braking. Instead, when possible, simply lift off the accelerator pedal and allow the hybrid system (rather than the brakes) to slow you. This generates additional electrical power, through regenerative deceleration. Regenerative deceleration helps recharge the hybrid battery pack, which gives you more “free” electrical power to use, instead of gasoline engine power—saving gas.
- As you would do in your home to conserve energy, set the climate control system to a comfortable yet not too cold setting, such as 73° instead of 70°.
- Use these driving feedback screen displays:

Technology Display (located in the center of the instrument cluster)

<p>Energy Flow Screen</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Displays 11 different modes to show how the vehicle is using or regenerating energy. 	<p>ECO Score Screen</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides a visual incentive to help you maximize fuel efficiency. Bars are added or subtracted based on average fuel consumption. The more efficiently you drive, the more bars you achieve.
<p>Total ECO Score Screen</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Displays your cumulative ECO score, carried over from the ECO Score Screen. When you earn 20 points, you're awarded one planet. So if you're really efficient, you can build an entire solar system. 	<p>Average Fuel Economy Screen</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Displays the miles per gallon that you're currently achieving.

Technology Display with Optional Navigation System

<p>Earth Screen</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitors how the Sonata Hybrid is using the engine and electric motor. Also tracks efficient driving with the bars of an ECO level display. 	<p>Car Screen</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides visual incentives and feedback on your driving efficiency. The more efficiently you drive, the more trees you earn. It's a fun and engaging way to encourage “green driving.”
<p>Energy Flow Screen</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides detailed system feedback, showing which devices are supplying power and where the power is going, to the wheels or to the battery. 	<p>Fuel Economy Screen</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shows how efficiently you've been driving over time, providing feedback on the previous 30 minutes of driving.

7. Do I have to plug in the Sonata Hybrid?

No. The Sonata Hybrid does not need to be plugged in. The battery pack is recharged by the gasoline engine and by energy that would normally be lost during deceleration.

8. Do I need to use special gasoline?

No. The Sonata Hybrid runs on regular unleaded gasoline.

9. Where are the batteries located?

The Sonata Hybrid's lithium polymer battery pack is located in a special case between the trunk and the rear seats. The compact battery pack weighs just 85.5 pounds versus the 123.9 pounds for the nickel metal hydride pack in the Toyota Camry Hybrid. The 12-volt battery is also located in the trunk, in a compartment on the passenger's side.

10. Can the Sonata Hybrid run on electricity if it runs out of gas?

No. Like a conventional car, the Sonata Hybrid will stop running when the supply of gasoline is exhausted.

11. Are there options available?

Yes. The Sonata Hybrid is available with a Premium Package that includes features such as a navigation system with backup camera, panoramic sunroof, 17-inch alloy wheels, leather seating surfaces with heated front and rear seats, and HD Radio technology.

12. How long do the batteries last?

There are many variables that will impact the life of the batteries. However, Hyundai has conducted extensive durability testing in all climates to ensure long and reliable battery life. Hyundai covers the batteries with a 10-year/100,000-mile battery warranty, as standard.

13. Does the hybrid system require any kind of special maintenance?

No. See the Sonata Hybrid Quick Reference Guide or Owner's Manual for maintenance details.

14. Can the Sonata Hybrid drive in the carpool lane with a single occupant?

Some states allow hybrid owners to use carpool, or "high-occupant vehicle (HOV)" lanes with only the driver in the vehicle. Check with the department of motor vehicles in your state of residence for the latest information.

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