

NUGGETS of Wisdom

from the Diabetes Community



A DiabetesMine eBook

Edited by Amy Tenderich
and Allison Blass



Nuggets

Stress

Exercise

Travel

Diabetes Police

Food

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Introduction

During the 2008 holiday season, Amy Tenderich, founder and author of the blog DiabetesMine, launched an interactive contest where community members submitted their best advice for handling an assortment of holiday related challenges, like holiday parties, exercising during the winter, and travel. Rather than lose all the wonderful words of wisdom accumulated over the course of the 5 week contest, Amy Tenderich and the other judges, Allison Blass and Scott Johnson, thought it would be beneficial for the community if some of the advice was collected into an ebook that could be used as a reference guide over the whole year.

This ebook is a collection of experiences written by people with diabetes in the hopes of making the lives of others a little bit easier throughout the year, rather than specifically during the holidays. The advice is written from first-hand experience and hopefully the five chapters will provide insight and inspiration.

While we wish we could use the hundreds of submissions sent to us, this ebook would be more like a textbook! We would like to thank all of the participants who sent in their submissions during the contest. To see all the submissions, please visit DiabetesMine.com/ebooksubmissions for a full list of links to each contest question. Our community is filled with experienced and extraordinary people with diabetes and their thoughtful contributions should be acknowledged.

Have a happy and healthy 2009!

Sincerely,

Amy Tenderich, Allison Blass, and Scott Johnson

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STRESS Nuggets



STRESS Nuggets

Stress • Exercise • Travel • Diabetes Police • Food



Amylia Grace

Fresh flowers are a fun way to bring a little color into your world.



Kerri Morrone Sparling

Music is a great way to get away from it all.



Sara

Creativity can bring out the carefree attitude of childhood.

Simple: Enjoy the simple pleasures of life. My family! — Krestita

I put everything on a calendar, including the last minute gift shopping and a few trips to the gym. My diabetes control goes out the window when I have to eat whatever is handy, and I stress about having too much to do. Advance planning allows for a better diet, more exercise, and much less stress. — Meg

I have stopped feeling obligated to attend everything I am invited to. I choose carefully what events I will attend. Also, I take the opportunity to destress with exercise. I read for 20 minutes before bed to relax my overactive mind. This allows me to sleep much better. I do much better with stress when I am well-rested. —Joan

I have discovered that one way to reduce stress is to get some type of MP3 player (like an iPod) and put on things that you like. I put on my iPod podcasts [and] my favorite music and wear this when I am working outside and am physically active. — David

All year round, but especially during the holidays, I make sure and see my acupuncturist, who is of great assistance in helping me to balance my whole body and my mind. It calms me down and forces me to slow down for at least an hour during the madcap everything else. Also, I pay more attention to doing very regular TaiChi- meditation in movement - and finally making sure to get more cardio advanced exercise. — Sara Myers

I try to remember to take small breaks throughout the day to just sit still, clear my mind and relax my body. Just a few minutes at a time really makes a difference to keep tensions from building. — Cleo

When worse comes to worse, there's always the advice that I think all moms used to give their kids: Take a very deep breath and count to 10. SLOWLY. Remember to give yourself that time before you say something you might regret later! — AngelaC

The trick is telling between those [who] are just edgy and those who are determined to get a reaction out of you. I just vow to myself that I'm not

going to stress just because someone else is. — Scott Strange

I'm all about staying creative. Personally, I gravitate toward art and crafty endeavors - making cards (be creative and take care of a holiday task), drawing, painting, computer graphics, knitting. Beyond that, there's cooking, gardening, exercising. IF you can lose yourself in an activity like that, you could emerge feeling mentally renewed. Better yet, get a buddy to join you or collaborate with your kid. Help each other, have some good conversation (working alongside your child is marvelously conducive to quality discussion time), and possibly get a few laughs, and you'll find yourself in a much improved state of mind when you're done. — Lee Ann Thill

My suggestion is to volunteer: at a homeless shelter, an assisted living facility, a soup kitchen, etc. No matter what I am stressed about, helping out the less fortunate certainly puts my problems in better perspective. — Sara

EXERCISE Nuggets



EXERCISE Nuggets

Stress • Exercise • Travel • Diabetes Police • Food




Jill's daughter Kacey won't let diabetes stop her. She's back on the field a week after diagnosis.



Who says exercise has to be boring? Try something new and exciting to spice up your workout routine!




Scott Johnson keeps active with his basketball team.


 If you are trying to do things alone it's very easy to put something off or just not do it.

If you plan something with other people, be it swimming, a gym class, mall walking, sports team, whatever, it's a lot harder to not do it. Firstly you have to let the other person or people know you are not going to be participating as planned which in itself can be an issue both in terms of letting somebody else down or just getting in contact with them. Then, since you are canceling the other people involved will most likely try to re-schedule.

— KDRoberts


 I make it a goal to move and stay active daily. I keep a pedometer on me all the time and have a daily goal of 10,000 steps. I find this little meter really helps me get going. I find that by doing the small stuff like parking the car further away, walking the shopping cart back to the store, taking the stairs, walking around the house while talking on the phone really makes these steps add up. Some days I just do not make it, but having the meter on me, during the day, I can look down and see how much more I need to do to get to my goal.

— David


 Take an exercise class. Sign up for a spinning, swimming or other class at your gym, or take a local boot camp class if you have that available. Making a financial commitment can help motivate;

just don't make your gym your largest charity donation.


— Anne

 I like to have a goal and a reward. This year I am signed up for the inaugural Disney Princess Half Marathon in March. The goal to finish the half marathon pushes me to train through the winter. The reward is enjoying the weekend in Florida with my training partners. This will be my first long run since diagnosis and they have supported me throughout.


— Annie

 This sounds a little crazy, but during cold weather (especially around the holidays) my friends and I do walking laps around the mall. Just dodging the people makes for a workout, plus we have a large track to go around. People watching, and the cool items in the store windows keep us completely entertained for at least an hour, and every day is different.


— Lesli

 Turn the radio on! What's your favorite music? Find it. Turn it up and move around. If it's just me, I find some fun music and I just dance around the place. If someone else is there, I entertain them by dancing around. You will break a sweat by moving... and have lots of fun.


— Andrea

 I work in the Corporate offices, and with three seven story buildings, each the length of football fields I have plenty of room to go roaming. I make an effort not to call or email anyone when I can walk to their cube, especially if going to their cube means I can take the stairs. I also take a 20-minute stretch break in the afternoon. I get up and just roam the halls, especially the ones that go by the gorgeous windows. It helps me to have a goal that I'm trying to reach, and in the winter a pedometer to push toward 10,000 steps a day is always good. It keeps me reminded that I need to make the effort.

— Emmy

 To keep myself motivated during the entire year I always focus on the positive benefits that exercising will have, including a longer, healthier life and the stabilizing effect it has on my blood sugar. During the holidays, when it gets hectic, I use the gym time as a break time (a stress free hour). Plus, another motivator is that my regular workout routine helps to eliminate any guilt when indulging in a few holiday treats!

— Randee

 I have a very active dog. Caring for her means that either my partner or I (or, on weekends, both of us) have to take her out for at least 20 minutes 3 times a day. When we have time, her walks can be longer and involve ball-throwing and lots of running around.

— Megan

TRAVEL Nuggets



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A man and a woman are posing for a photo on the Great Wall of China. The man, on the left, is wearing a white polo shirt, dark shorts, a grey cap, and a backpack. The woman, on the right, is wearing a black sleeveless top and dark shorts. They are standing on a stone wall with a crenelated parapet. In the background, the Great Wall continues up a steep, rocky hillside under a clear sky. The name 'Alison Finney' is written vertically in white text on the left side of the image.

A full-page photograph of a woman named Angela standing in a grassy field. She is wearing a black t-shirt, sunglasses, and jeans, with her hands on her hips. Behind her is a stone wall and a building with a red roof. In the background, a large, rugged mountain peak rises against a clear blue sky. The name 'Angela' is written vertically on the left side of the image.

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DIABETES POLICE

Nuggets



DIABETES POLICE Nuggets

Stress • Exercise • Travel • Diabetes Police • Food



With modern technology like glucose meters and insulin pumps, a person with diabetes can tackle any challenge.

I usually tell them that diabetes is unique in the way it manifests itself in each person and what each diabetic can eat and the amount is different in each of us. We are all different, just like snowflakes.

—Debbie

‘Thank you for your concern.’ Smile. Change the subject. Repeat. In my experience, the diabetes police aren’t usually loved ones (at least not after the first few years).

— Mollyjade

To strangers or people who know me less well who tell me that I shouldn’t eat something, or warn me about the sugar content, I simply tell them that I’m on the pump (here I might take it out and show them) and that means that as long as I know how many grams of carbohydrate are in something and bolus appropriately for it, I can eat more or less whatever I want. This works on everyone except my Type 2 grandfather, who, 13 years into this, still hasn’t registered that my diabetes and his are different animals.

— Megan



Carbohydrate counting books can help show non-diabetics that we can eat treats.

Let’s face it, it is usually one or two souls who probably have good intentions. If I go into the situation with an attitude based on past annoyances, chances are it’s going to end up making both me and them uncomfortable. The only person I can really change is me so I may as well reframe my attitude... So, I plan to put on a genuine smile, thank that person for their concern and say that I’ve got it covered. We’ll see if that works.

I usually start with a detailed explanation of what carb counting is and how to do it. They are usually surprised that I can name the amount of carbs of almost anything on the table. Then I tell them the carb count of what they are about to eat. Usually they are too amazed that I actually weigh and measure my food most of the time to continue diabetes police-ing!

I like to explain my diabetes to anyone as I am a stick shift and you run automatic. Where your body adjusts in reaction to everything you do/eat, I need to



Scales and measuring cups can help a non-diabetic provide you with necessary information - make them part of your team!

‘shift my gears’ to keep going. — Sarah

I find that if I am a little proactive at the beginning of a meal, it goes a long way to silence the diabetes police. I generally have an idea of who might say something to me. So, just before the meal I go up to them and ask if there is anything they know about that I should avoid. Generally there is one or two desert items so high in sugar, in their mind it may kill a diabetic (as one person told me last night) I ask them to point this out to me. Most often, it is something I would probably avoid anyway.

—David

I stay patient. I know people are not all educated in certain things so i try to not get mad and make the most of it.

—Tarra

Don’t worry, I brought extra insulin. Just for this. This is pretty hard to say with a straight face, as I have an insulin pump.

— Patrick

FOOD Nuggets



FOOD Nuggets

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Amylia doesn't let her diabetes get in the way of a good time in Taiwan.





Beth says Diabetics CAN eat sugar!




Angela celebrates her birthday with a cake made from Splenda.


 I try to enjoy small amounts of my favorite things, test often and bolus on the pump as necessary. — Kathy


 Calorie King is your best friend. Make sure to carry around your favorite dietary fact book (I use Calorie King: Calorie, Fat and Carbohydrate counter.) It's an invaluable resource and really helps when in a pinch. — Chris


 My strategy for managing blood sugar levels at parties is quite simple. I try to consume very little more than I ordinarily do and concentrate on enjoying the company of friends and relatives. That way I am not stressed out, nor does my eating or drinking cause anyone else to take notice. Since I never consume alcohol at any other time, not doing so at a party doesn't raise an eyebrow. Simple but effective. — John


 As a pumper, I have the option of using a dual or square wave bolus while at parties or large meals. When figuring my bolus I take not only the carbs into consideration but the fat as well. Holiday meals and party food is often very


rich and loaded with both carbs and fat, and that fat can really change the action of the carbs. By using a dual wave bolus and testing frequently I can usually manage but I still have to watch for rising blood sugar overnight since the fat can really hit me then. — Liz

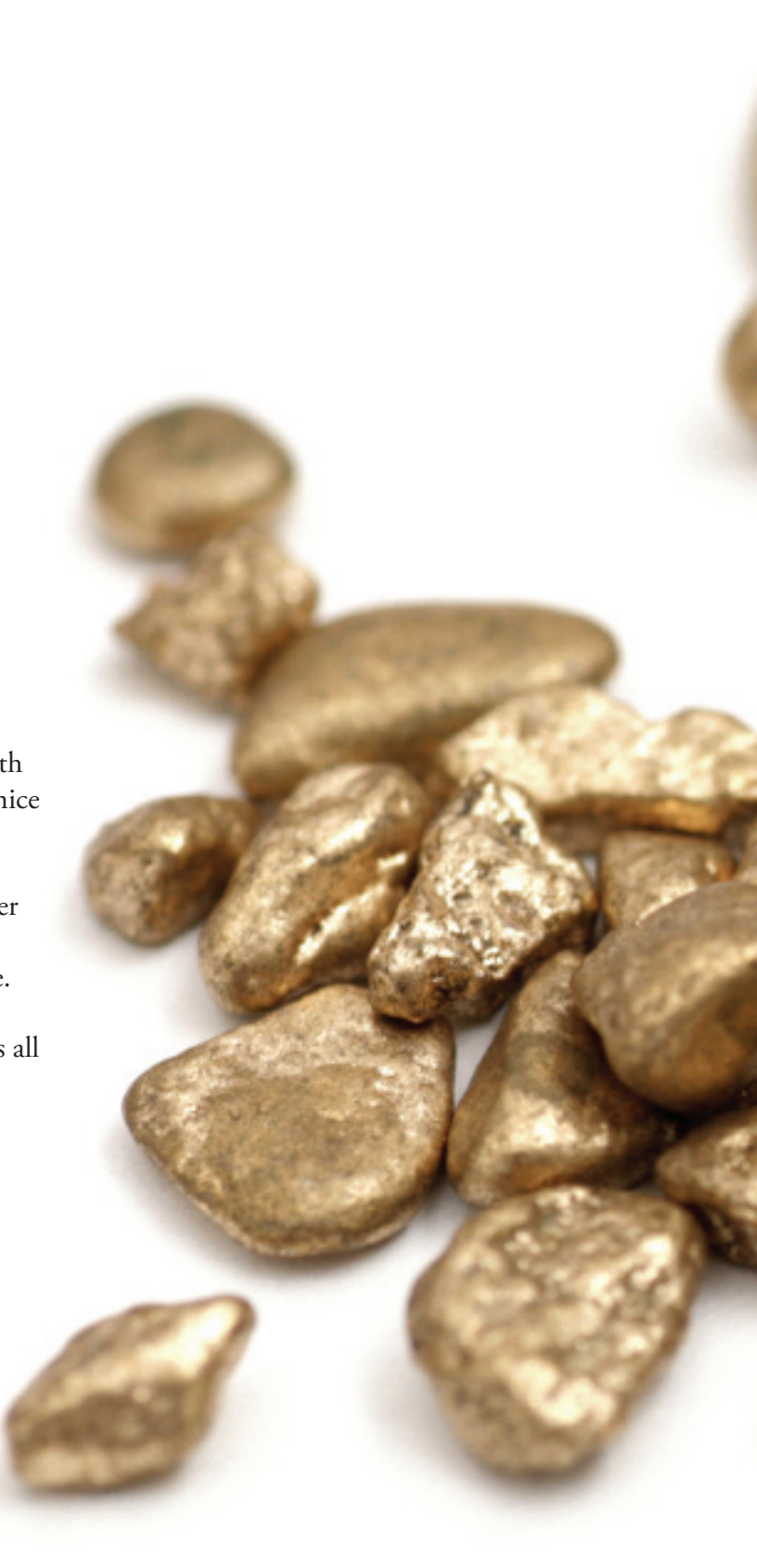
 I do not allow myself to pick at foods. If I am going to eat I must put it on a plate where I can be able to look at the portion size, etc. This makes it easier for me to determine carbohydrates of the food. I do look at my Calorie King book to help me estimate the carbs. — Tarra

 I concentrate on eating the stuff that only minimally raises my blood glucose level, i.e., protein and fat. (It's also the satiating stuff!) That means I eat cheese and meat and non-starchy veggies (i.e., cauliflower and broccoli). It means I don't eat the bread around sandwiches, or the tortillas around wraps. If I eat anything floury, then it has to be excellent, such as home-made shortbreads (and then only one — if I can) — Mark

 I try to test often, stick to water or diet beverages, eat the low to no carb items, and generally enjoy myself. Parties are a time for happiness and fun. In my opinion, it's ok to let loose once in a while and relax on the control for a night as long as I stay vigilant the rest of the time. — Jason

 My most important strategy [is to] enjoy the moment of celebrating with my friends and family and make the focus on them - not the food. Life gets so hectic and our time together is short - I want savor every moment I have with them! — Kelly K

 I make sure that when I arrive I'm not starving, because if I am there is no keeping me from eating 14 deviled eggs. (slightly kidding here) I keep a can of natural almonds in my car and I munch on a handful before I go into restaurants or parties to keep me feeling full. Another thing I do, if I know I might want to indulge in a few sweets is get a good cardio workout in before the party. When I exercise it keeps my sugars lower for several hours after the workout and almost seems to act as extra insulin would. — Windy

A large pile of gold nuggets of various sizes and shapes is scattered on a white background. The nuggets have a metallic, slightly textured appearance. One single nugget is also visible in the upper left area of the page.

We hope these Nuggets of Wisdom help and inspire you in your life with diabetes. If nothing else, it sure is nice to know how many others are out there living with the same struggles and frustrations. Our aim is to bring the diabetes community together in ways never possible before. For that, we say thank you, Internet, for making this achievable. And thank YOU, our brothers and sisters with diabetes, for sharing your best practices with us all at DiabetesMine.com!

In appreciation,

Amy Tenderich



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