



THE WHITTIER INSTITUTE FOR DIABETES

9894 Genesee Avenue  
La Jolla, California 92037  
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- ◆ Follow-up with group education

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- A one-day course for healthcare professionals
  - September 10th OR October 2nd 2004
- Conducted by The Whittier Institute for Diabetes  
Professional Development team

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A one day course on practical positive nutrition and behavior tips!

- ◆ *The Whittier Institute for Diabetes*  
2nd floor conference room
- ◆ July 28th or August 30th, 2004  
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
- ◆ A healthy lunch will be provided!
- ◆ Fee: \$150
- ◆ 8 CEUs available

Registration information available by emailing  
[clute.heather@scrippshealth.org](mailto:clute.heather@scrippshealth.org), on The Whittier’s  
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858-626-5696.



# KEEPING IN TOUCH

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE WHITTIER INSTITUTE FOR DIABETES

Spring 2004

## GREETINGS!

I think I have a fabulous doctor for my diabetes care. How many of you feel that way? Plenty, I hope; not many, I fear. Why do I love my doctor? Let me count the ways...

1) ***He knows diabetes.*** This is obviously important! I'm very fortunate in that I see an endocrinologist who specializes in diabetes and other hormonal conditions. But there are many outstanding primary care doctors, internists, and family medicine docs who know a lot about good diabetes care and management. You can spot pretty quickly the ones who know diabetes from those who don't. At one point, about 3 years into my life with diabetes, I had to choose a new primary care MD. When she asked how much insulin I took every day, my answer was "It depends." With a quizzical look, she asked again – "But how many units do you inject each day?" I replied that I adjust my insulin to the food I eat, the activity I have, and to my glucose readings, and that amount ranged from 22 to 30 units a day. At this point, her body language expressed doubt and confusion, and I almost felt as though my behavior was aberrant and inappropriate! The rest of that first and only visit was strained and meaningless to me as she ran down the list of complications from diabetes, the importance of avoiding sugar in my diet and taking my insulin on time. I'm sure she knew more than I did about a myriad of things...but in the diabetes department, I want my doctor to at least be up on the newest insulin and have decent communication skills. Which leads to the rest of the reasons why I like my doctor...!

2) ***His support staff makes every contact personal.*** Some people may not

like this, but I do. These nurses, medical assistants, and office staff must see a hundred patients in a week. And yet, in my four visits and occasional phone calls each year, they show their care for me through their actions and words. They are very responsive to messages I leave, whether it's regarding a prescription, a blood sugar question, or an inquiry about my lab results. They treat me with respect, and that makes the entire experience much more pleasant than it could otherwise be.

3) ***He asks me how I'm doing.*** Then, he listens! He knows things about my life outside of my diabetes and he makes the time to ask. Out of respect for his time, I don't give him all the joyful details (like how my daughter is now singing "Happy Birthday" and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.") Nor do I tell him that Grace has watched me check my blood sugar so many times, she knows how to operate the meter and lancing device on her own (she's 15 months old...). I do tell him the important things in my life that may be affecting my diabetes self-care, such as the stress I'm under or my decreased exercise and the difficulty I'm having making time for myself. He recognizes that life interferes with "perfect" diabetes management, and he shows respect for all my challenges by listening, reassuring me that it is over time that the high blood sugars do their damage; and then...the final reason that he's perfect for me....

4) ***He's my teammate in my diabetes management.*** Rather than telling me (army general-style) what to do, he offers suggestions. Then, in a coach-like fashion, asks me to do my best and let him know how it goes. In the past, he's given me opportunities to try new technology, if I wanted to (such as the Glucowatch and the Medtronic MiniMed CGMS). No pressure, but he explained their potential benefit and made them available to me.

Last visit (which was an embarrassing 9 months after my previous visit to him; and I teach diabetes education...) he gently suggested that perhaps I might not wait so long before coming to see him again. I didn't feel judged; I didn't feel admonished; I felt like he was concerned and wanted to be my partner, but he can't do that if I don't come to my visits. I've already booked my next appointment with him, and I intend to keep it!

I hope this newsletter finds you all continuing the good and meaningful work towards healthy, balanced diabetes care. Remember, if you don't feel you have a health care provider who is on your team, you might try writing a list of what you want, need and expect from your doctor, and then having a frank discussion with him or her. Our doctors do want to help us! Sometimes we just need to tell them how to best do that. Good luck!

In good health,  
Heather Nielsen Clute

## THE WHITTIER INSTITUTE FOR DIABETES

*A Non-Profit Organization  
The Whittier Institute  
provides resources for  
innovative diabetes  
research, education,  
and patient care;  
and is a catalyst for  
collaboration among  
leading organizations  
to effect a cure for  
diabetes.*

## FREE SUPPORT GROUPS – OPEN TO ANYONE!

These meetings are held for the benefit of people with diabetes (and their loved ones) who would like more information, help, or contact with their peers facing similar issues of living with this condition. Please come to share your experiences, learn from the facilitators (diabetes professionals), and guest speakers. Come a little early for informal social time with your peers. *Registration is not required.*

### North County: *Encinitas*

2nd Wednesday of every month 1:30-2:30 PM  
332 Santa Fe Drive #120

(Medical office building behind Scripps Memorial Hospital, Encinitas)

Call 858-626-5665 for more information

### *Upcoming Speakers:*

July 14: **Judy Feltman, PharmD,**  
Scripps Hospital, Encinitas

*“Update on Common Diabetes, Blood Pressure, and Cholesterol Medications”*

November 10: **Janice Daulton, RD,**  
Scripps Whittier Diabetes Program

*“Healthy Dining through the Holidays”*

### Central Coast: *The Whittier Institute for Diabetes, La Jolla*

3rd Wednesday of every month 4:00 – 5:00 PM  
9894 Genesee Avenue, 2nd Floor Resource Center  
(Adjacent to Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla)  
Call 858-626-5696 for more information

### San Diego: *Scripps Mercy Hospital*

2nd Tuesday of every month 2:00-3:00  
Lower Level, Room 5A  
Call 619-293-3196 for more information

### South Bay: *Scripps Well-Being Center - Chula Vista*

English: 2nd Thursday of every month 1:00 – 2:00 PM  
Spanish: 2nd Thursday of every month 2:30 – 3:30 PM

555 Broadway Suite #2029  
Chula Vista, 91911

Call 858-626-5672 for more information

## RECENT READINGS

### GETTING THE DIABETES INFORMATION YOU NEED

*Diabetes Self-Management*, May/June 2004

Today’s healthcare professionals rarely have the time to answer all our questions. Where do we turn, in this information age, to get the best and most appropriate information relevant to us? Besides the Keeping In Touch newsletter, whom can you trust to give you relevant, accurate, unbiased, non-commercial advice?

Janis Rozler, RD, LVN, CDE wrote a helpful article in last month’s *Diabetes Self-Management* about this very topic. Her suggestions on how to use each source to our best advantage are as follows:

#### • Health-care Visits

Come with a list of prioritized questions and concerns (high blood glucose patterns; feelings of depression)

Be clear about what is working and what is not working about your current diabetes regimen

• Share your ideas about solutions for your

concerns – possibly a visit to the dietitian or a fitness specialist might expand your health care team and offer you new angles and expertise

- What about research studies/opportunities? Any new books your doctor has heard about? New diabetes developments?

If you have a lot of questions, let the receptionist know this when you schedule your appointment. Perhaps you can get some extra time, or you can see the doctor at a time of day that is least hectic.

#### The Printed Word

- Seek experts’ words. Check credentials, and see if the author is writing in his or her area of expertise. The medical world is full of “alphabet soup,” so its helpful to understand what all those letters mean next to someone’s name. (ex: CDE = Certified Diabetes Educator. This is someone who has a degree or license in one of many specific areas of health care, and has taken a nationally-administered exam testing

their knowledge of diabetes.)

- Check affiliation with national organizations. Some of the most respected diabetes centers and organizations include: The American Diabetes Association (ADA); American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE); Diabetes Research Institute; International Diabetes Center (IDC); Joslin Diabetes Center; Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF)
- Plausibility. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Nothing “cures” diabetes, at this time. Be wary of a “miracle” promise. We need to be optimistic, but cautious consumers.

#### The World Wide Web

- Frequently, tall tales are posted on the internet and spread rapidly via email. To check out potential rumors, visit [www.truthorfiction.com](http://www.truthorfiction.com) or [www.urbanlegends.about.com](http://www.urbanlegends.about.com). The site [www.quackwatch.org](http://www.quackwatch.org) belongs

to a nonprofit corporation dedicated to exposing health-related myths, fads, frauds, and falsehoods; [www.consumerlab.com](http://www.consumerlab.com) is an independent Web site that tests claims made on herbal, vitamin, and mineral supplements; and [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov) is a site that was developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as a guide to reliable health information.

- Last issue of the KIT, I offered a brief list of some reputable Web sites. Some additional resources include:
  - [www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org) (Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation)
  - [www.joslin.org](http://www.joslin.org) (Joslin Diabetes Center)
  - [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)
  - [www.diabetestalkradio.com](http://www.diabetestalkradio.com) (A weekly internet-based radio show that features interviews with many top educators. Visit archives of past programs)
  - [www.DiabetesSelfManagement.com](http://www.DiabetesSelfManagement.com) (Diabetes Self-Management magazine)
- Please consult your MD before following any advice you get from the internet!
- Chat rooms and bulletin boards can offer great support, but they can also perpetuate bad advice. Check to see if the chat room is monitored by a health care professional who can respond to and edit faulty information.

#### Friends and Family

- Many of us have loved ones with diabetes who willingly offer (unsolicited, at times!) guidance and advice. This can be terrific...or it can be terrible. Treatment and care have changed dramatically just in the last 5 years, so some well-meaning and previously-true comments may be out of date.
- If advice you are getting from well-meaning friends and family sounds suspicious, please check it out with your health care team before taking it to heart.
- Ask your friends and family where they got the information they are passing on to you. Perhaps it is accurate, recent, and applicable to you...depends on the source, and the accuracy of the reporter's memory!

Regardless of where you are getting your information, good for you for seeking to know more! Knowledge is a fabulous first step towards the best behavior changes that keep us healthy with diabetes. There are answers out there, and with persistence, patience, and a cautious but open attitude, you can find those that apply to you.

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*This newsletter is a free publication founded by Helen Oswalt, written by Heather Nielsen Clute, a peer diabetes educator and program developer with Project Dulce and The Whittier Institute for Diabetes. Thank you to The Whittier Institute for Diabetes for their financial support.*

*To be added to the newsletter mailing list, please call 858-626-5696.*

## TRACKING TRANS FATS:

### CUTTING DOWN ON TRANS FAT MAY HELP CUT DOWN ON HEART DISEASE. – *Diabetes Forecast, June 2004*

If you haven't heard of "trans fats" yet, I'm glad I could be the first to alert you to this nastiest-of-the-fats. Since heart disease is the leading cause of death for 8 out of 10 people with diabetes, anything that we can do to reduce our risk of cardiac events is worth noting. Enter the Trans Fat, also known as partially hydrogenated fats or oils. One of the #1 avoidable villains of our hearts.

Trans fats are, simply put, liquid fats that have been turned solid through chemical hydrogenation process. Trans fat helps stabilize the flavor of a product and gives it a much longer shelf life. When researchers discovered that saturated fat raised cholesterol and contributed to heart disease and stroke, the food industry began searching for "healthier" alternatives.

We now know that these trans fats also promote heart disease and stroke by raising dietary cholesterol. Worse still, trans fats may raise LDL ("lame, lousy" unhealthy blood cholesterol) even more than saturated fat.

Currently it is laborious to identify the trans fats in foods; you need to read the ingredients (often long lists with small print), and look for the listing of hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil. Beginning January 1, 2006, the FDA will require food manufacturers to add trans fats to the food label. It will appear as a subcategory under Total Fat, and will be listed in grams.

It is extremely difficult to eliminate trans fats from our diets entirely in today's packaged-food-world. The average American eats 5-6 grams of trans fat a day; a realistic goal might be to limit it to 1 gram a day. Until the food labels tell us the exact amount of trans fat, it is hard to know exactly how much you're consuming in those crackers, cakes, or salad dressings.

Tips to lower trans fats *now* include:

- Use tub or liquid margarine (not solid)
- Use olive or canola oil in cooking
- Avoid or limit commercially fried foods such as French fries
- Switch from a big-brand peanut butter to a healthier brand with the fat floating on the top (believe it or not, this floating fat is much healthier than those brands that "hide" the fat in the form of trans fats). Laura Scudders brand is all-natural and can be found in most supermarkets; look for peanuts and (if you like) salt as the only ingredients.

With some practice, and an investment of time reading ingredient lists, you can find which of your regularly consumed foods contains hydrogenated oils. Hopefully, you can find healthier fat (unsaturated or polysaturated fats) replacement foods that you enjoy. Or even better...substitute some fresh summer berries for those potato chips! A fat free choice that doesn't even have a label to read!

