

# Diabetic Monthly

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Gunnison Valley Diabetes Self-Management Education Program  
45 East 100 North Gunnison, Utah 84634

## Save Money on your A1C Test at Support Group

*By Angie Merchant*

**Happy New Year!!!** Start out your new year right by getting your A1C tested. January is the month that it can be tested at Support Group for only \$5.00. This is a special price just for this meeting. Payment for the labs will be due at the time of service, and insurance companies will not be billed. I know the economy has made it difficult for many to stay compliant to their diabetic regime. This is our way of helping you. For those of you who have never attended support group, now is a GREAT time to start. January's meetings will be strictly blood draws by the Gunnison Homecare nurses. The Gunnison meeting will be held January 19, 2010 at 3:00 to 4:00pm at the Gunnison Homecare building located at 45 East 100 North Gunnison. The Monroe meeting will be held January 26, 2010 at 11:00-12:00 pm at the South Sevier Senior Citizens Center. Bring your friends and family- everyone is welcome to attend.

**What is an A1C Test?** The A1C test tells you about your blood sugar control over the last 3 months. It is the best way for you and your doctor to measure how well you are doing. Your doctor uses the test results to change or adjust your diabetes medications or management plan. You should get an A1C test at least twice a year. You should get tested more often if you use insulin or if your A1C numbers are too high. An A1C test is not the same as the finger stick test you do with your own meter. A finger stick only shows how much sugar is in your blood at the time you do the test. An A1C test can detect problems that simple finger sticks can easily miss.

I look forward to seeing you at support group this month. I want you to know that I would be glad to help you with your diabetes management anytime. Feel free to call me or stop into the office. Thanks to all of you who attended support group last month. Dr. Cummings done a great job, and I hope everyone learned a lot.

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## Support Group Times and Locations

### Gunnison Support Group

45 East 100 North Gunnison  
January 19, 2010 at 3:00-4:00pm

### Monroe Support Group

140 West 100 South Monroe  
January 26, 2010 at 11:00am-12:00pm

## Reducing the Cost of Diabetic Medications

*Diabetes Wellness News: Januarv 2010, Vol.16 No 1, pg 5.*

As the new year begins it is a good idea to plan how to use your Medicare benefits most efficiently in order to minimize your out-of-pocket expenses. Planning ahead and using your benefits wisely will affect how long your Medicare Part D benefits will last before you reach your limit. It is important to shop around for the best prices when filling your prescriptions; using a mail order pharmacy may reduce your cost. Also, talk to your healthcare provider about using the generic rather than the brand-name medication, as generic medications are much less expensive.

Consider using a coupon or voucher that offers a free supply of a prescribed medication that can be used with Medicare or Medicaid benefits; however, you cannot use vouchers that offer a reduction in co-pays - read the fine print carefully! Search the internet for coupons or ask your healthcare provider if he or she can provide you with coupons or vouchers for a free supply.

Ask your healthcare provider if you are able to take a combination product. Combination products are frequently used in the treatment of diabetes or hypertension; they provide two different medications in one pill (Avandamet, Actosplus Met, Glucovance, Avandaryl, Duetact and Janumet).

If you are using one of the synthetic insulins - Novolog, Humalog, Aphrida, Lantus, Levemir- and you find that you are regularly discarding a half-bottle of insulin, consider switching from a vial or syringe to an insulin pen to reduce waste. A vial of insulin is only good for a one-month period before it expires, thus wasting insulin. An insulin pen contains less insulin, and thus reduces waste. Discuss with your pharmacist if this would be a cost-saving measure.

In some cases medications of higher strengths may be split if they are scored, for instance if you need to take a 20 mg dose of a medication daily and it is available in 40 mg strength, by splitting the tablet you will have a two month supply for the cost of one month. Discuss this potential cost benefit with your pharmacist. Planning ahead may help you save money.

### Note from Educator: Additional Savings May Be Available on Supplies

*By: Angie Merchant*

It is also possible that you could be saving money on your diabetic supplies by going through a mail order company rather than the local pharmacy. By going through one of these mail order type companies, they may be able to run the supplies through your DME benefit rather than your pharmacy benefit. Many times this can save you a whole lot of money. The good part about these companies is that they can check your benefits, and give you an estimate of what it would cost you if you went through them. You are not obligated to purchase the supplies through them, but if it saves you money- you may want to. There are a few different companies that I have worked with for these services— CCS Medical Supply Company and Diabetes Specialty Center are the main two. They are in no way affiliated with the Gunnison Valley Diabetic Program. But if you are interested in either company or would simply like more information, then give me a call. I will have forms available at the January Support Group also if you are interested.

## How to Fight Off Colds and the Flu

This time of the year is busy enough without having to work in extra time to deal with colds or the flu. Viruses and bacteria thrive in cold temperatures so you must do your part to protect yourself against their attack.

1. Eat a diet high in Vitamin C and antioxidants: oranges, broccoli, and bell peppers. Vitamins and antioxidants are absorbed more effectively from foods as compared to pills or supplements; therefore, eat fresh fruits and vegetables at every meal.
2. Drink lots of fluids to keep well hydrated—especially water. Strive to drink between 8-12 glasses of fluids a day. This will help to flush bacteria and viruses out of your body.
3. Get 8 hours of sleep at night. Getting sufficient sleep prevents your body from producing an excess of stress hormones. Stress is bad for your immune system.
4. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Washing your hands for 15 seconds using warm water and soap creates a barrier against germs.
5. Exercise daily. Exercising helps blood flow throughout your body—providing a boost to your immune system.



*How do I prevent this?*

## Tip of the Month... Get Moving!!!

**Question:** How can I start being physically active?

**Answer:** Choose any activity you enjoy to increase the chances you'll stick with it. Walking is most popular and most frequently recommended for overweight people. Start out slowly, walking about 10 minutes 5 days a week. Gradually increase to walking 30 minutes 5 days a week. You can also take the stairs, mow the lawn, shovel snow, and run the vacuum. Most weight loss programs encourage you to do many types of activity to burn the most calories.



Keeping records of your physical activity (minutes or calories burned) in your food record helps you identify patterns and provides good feedback on your progress. You'll be able to see the connection between calories burned and weight loss. Measure your hips, waist, biceps, and thighs. Muscle weighs more than fat. Many times its easy to get discouraged if you only go by weight.

By measuring, you will be able to encourage yourself with the changes in your measurements, and how your clothes fit, too! While you walk, you can listen to tapes that encourage you and help you vary the pace for a better workout. Or you can get a book on tape from the library and enjoy it while you get your exercise.

### **Food for Thought:**

**“We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once.” Calvin Coolidge**

## Recipe of the Month... Rice Crust Pizza (makes 6 servings)

1. Take 3 cups cooked white or brown rice (brown rice is preferred).
2. Add 1 egg, beaten; 2 Tbsp freshly grated Parmesan cheese; and 2 tsp basil. Mix well. Press into a round 12-inch pizza pan.
3. Spread evenly.
4. Bake in a 350 degree F oven for 10 minutes.
5. Top with 1 cup shredded, fat-free mozzarella cheese, 1 cup reduced-fat pizza sauce, 1 cup mushrooms, and 1 cup sliced red or green pepper.
6. Return to the oven and bake until cheese melts.

**Nutritional information:** 1 ½ starch exchange; 1 vegetable exchange; 1 lean meat exchange. Calories 184, Calories from fat 22, Total fat 2 gr, Saturated fat 0.8 g, Cholesterol 40 mg, Sodium 427 mg, **Total Carbohydrate 28 g**, Dietary fiber 2 g, Sugars 4 g, Protein 10 g.

## Good News about the Gunnison Diabetic Program

The Gunnison Valley Diabetic Self-Management Education Program is now certified Nationally through AADE to provide diabetic education. This certification allows our program to bill Medicare, Medicaid, and almost all insurance companies. It also ensures that the care that is given is of the highest quality.

A recent study of an extensive database of Medicare and commercial member claims revealed that people with diabetes who received diabetes education had lower average health care costs than patients who did not participate in diabetes education. Medicare patients who participated in diabetes education cost the health care system 14% less than Medicare patients who did not participate.

Diabetes education is the ongoing process of facilitating the knowledge, skill, and ability necessary for diabetes self-care. Diabetes education aims to achieve optimal health status, better quality of life and reduce the need for costly health care.

If you or someone you know could benefit from Diabetic Education, please feel free to call me (Angie Merchant) anytime at the number below.

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