Did You Know Diabetes Can Harm Vision?



eople with diabetes are more likely to develop eye problems, such as cataracts and glaucoma, but the effect of diabetes on the retina is the main threat to vision. Damage to the retina is called diabetic retinopathy, a disease that can cause vision loss and in extreme cases complete blindness. According to the National Eye Institute, nearly half of those who have diabetes will develop some degree of diabetic retinopathy during their lifetimes.

Retinal problems are caused by damage to the tiny blood vessels in the retina. These blood vessels may weaken gradually due to high blood pressure and high blood glucose. Eventually they may break, creating swelling and small hemorrhages that blur vision. In advanced cases new blood vessels can grow. These vessels may bleed, blocking vision.

arning Signs

Often there are no early warning signs of diabetic retinopathy, so it's important to have your eyes checked annually. Contact your eye doctor if you notice any sudden changes in

Blurry or double vision

your vision, or symptoms such as:

- Rings, flashing lights or blank spots
- Dark or floating spots
- Pain or pressure in one or both of your eyes
- Trouble seeing things out of the corners of your eyes

Vision loss can be frightening, but there are good treatments available. Nashoba Valley Medical Center's Eye Care Institute is the only hospital in the region able to offer patients certain highly advanced ophthalmic surgeries, including a surgical procedure called a vitrectomy to treat retinopathy.

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"We recently acquired a cutting-edge microscope and top-of-the-line vitrectomy system allowing patients with diabetes to now have access to world class retina surgical procedures, right in their own backyard," says Gisela Velez, MD, a highly skilled retina surgeon at Nashoba Valley Medical Center's Eye Care Institute. "A vitrectomy removes hemorrhages from diabetes complications and replaces it with clear fluid. The surgery helps slow vision loss, but it is not a cure."



Preventive Steps

preventive steps you can take to care for your eyes, including: As you are managing your diabetes there

Schedule a dilated eye exam-

pupils. This gives the doctor a closer look drops are used to dilate (enlarge) the eye exam once a year even if your vision at the retina and optic nerve to check seems tine. for signs of damage or disease. Have an To screen for diabetic retinopathy, eye

Control blood sugar levels.

The Diabetes Control and Complications levels. your doctor about your target blood sugar blood glucose regularly and talk with progression of retinopathy. Check your blood sugar levels slows the onset and Trial showed that better control of

cholesterol under control. Keep blood pressure and

elevated blood pressure and cholesterol maintaining a healthy weight, and taking A healthy diet, regular exercise, Studies have shown that controlling manage blood pressure and cholesterol. medications as prescribed can help can reduce the risk of vision loss.

Don't smoke or use tobacco.

diabetic retinopathy. Talk to your doctor about ways to quit. diabetes complications, including Smoking increases your risk of various

endocrinologist at Nashoba's Diabetes and side effects of diabetes is to keep blood medications." through diet, exercise and appropriate center in the region. "This can be achieved Endocrine Center, the largest accredited sugars as close to the normal range as possible," explains Roshney Jacob, MD, an "The best prevention for all negative

Endocrine-Center to learn more about the services provided at Nashoba's Diabetes and Endocrine Center. Visit www.nashobamed.org/Diabetes-and-

*Source: Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.org *Source: National Eye Institute, www.nei.nih.gov

Photographs of Vision with Diabetic Retinopathy. Np.nd. nei.nih.gow/health/diabetic/retinopathy. Web. 4 12 2015.



Person with normal vision



Renowned Retina Surgeon Institute and Welcomes Nashoba Opens Eye Care

Nashoba Valley Medical Center has

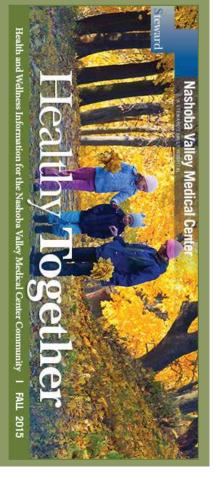


a highly skilled expanded its retina surgeon Gisela Velez, MD, recently welcomed services and ophthalmic surgery to the medical

is the only retina surgeon practicing

staff. Dr. Velez

Ophthalmologist Steven Brusie, MD, in **Drs. Velez or Brusie, call 978-784-9990** Nashoba's new Eye Care Institute. performing eye surgery for patients at in the Nashoba Valley and joins To schedule an appointment with



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