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# Nashoba Valley Medical Center

A STEWARD FAMILY HOSPITAL

Steward

# Health Matters

A publication of Steward Health Care for Residents of Nashoba Valley

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FALL 2018



# Understanding Weight Loss Surgery

A conversation with Michael Jiser, MD,  
Nashoba Valley Medical Center bariatric surgeon

## **Q. What are surgical options for weight loss?**

**A.** Nashoba Valley Medical Center offers two types of bariatric procedures: sleeve gastrectomy and gastric bypass surgery.

## **Q. How has weight loss surgery evolved?**

**A.** Weight loss surgery has come a long way since laparoscopic procedures were introduced in the 1990s. Both sleeve gastrectomy and gastric bypass are now routine surgeries. It takes approximately 45 to 60 minutes, is often done in a community hospital, and typically requires a one-night hospital stay. Patients are back to most activities within a week.

## **Q. What can a person undergoing weight loss surgery expect?**

**A.** Weight loss after surgery can be very rapid. The average can be about four to six pounds of weight loss per week in the first few months, with patients losing 60 to 70 percent of their excess weight, depending on their starting weight. More importantly, most can expect swift improvement in their overall health. Many patients are thrilled to no longer need medications to treat diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol as they continue to lose weight.

## **Q. Who is a candidate for weight loss surgery?**

**A.** There are several criteria for a patient to be a candidate. For some people, we simply use the body mass index (BMI) scale to identify if a candidate qualifies. For others, we consider weight-related co-morbidities.

## **Q. Why is BMI important, and what are weight-related co-morbidities?**

**A.** We now know that many health issues that Americans face are directly due to weight. The BMI helps us measure this and assess risk factors that may affect our health. Co-morbidities are medical conditions that are caused or made worse by a person's weight. These include common conditions like high blood pressure and high cholesterol that can lead to heart attack and stroke. Others includes diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, and arthritis.

## **Q. We talk about an obesity epidemic in America. How bad is it?**

**A.** Obesity is one disease that affects nearly every American. Most of us have a family member, friend or colleague with obesity. Statistically, one in three Americans is obese or overweight. One way to think of obesity is to think of it as malnutrition. Most people associate malnutrition with a lack of food. However, malnutrition means "bad nutrition." In America, we are killing ourselves early with too many calories and the wrong type of calories. It has been reported that this is the first generation of Americans that will not live as long as their parents. Some people feel like it's their fault. The truth is obesity doesn't discriminate. It affects all of us.

## **Q. What are ways we can lose weight?**

**A.** In my opinion, there are four ways to lose weight: diet, exercise, medications, and surgery. However, many people have spent years dieting and exercising with minimal results and don't even realize that surgery is an option. Now with surgery, in addition to proper diet and continued exercise, their chances of success are greatly improved. You can establish the right combination with guidance from your physician.

## **Q. If I'm considering weight loss surgery, how can I get started?**

**A.** Learn more by attending by requesting an initial consultation with a weight loss surgeon. During a one-on-one visit, questions and concerns regarding weight loss surgery are discussed in depth. A complete history and physical are performed to ensure that weight loss surgery is a safe and appropriate option for successful weight loss. All lab and other tests are done locally.



## **Nashoba Valley Medical Center Welcomes Bariatric Surgeon Michael Jiser, MD to the Medical Staff**

Bariatric Surgeon Michael Jiser, MD, joined the Center for Weight Control at Nashoba Valley Medical Center at the beginning of March to provide weight loss surgical procedures, including gastric bypass and sleeve gastrectomy (also known as gastric sleeve). Dr. Jiser received his medical degree from the New York Medical College in Valhalla, New York, and completed his residency in general surgery at Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester in New Rochelle, New York.

In addition to our weight loss services, the Center for Weight Control offers inpatient nutrition counseling, evaluation, and the preparation of sample meal plans for those patients with specific medical conditions.

**To schedule an appointment with a Center for Weight Loss team member, call 978-862-LOSE or visit [www.nashobamed.org/weightcontrol](http://www.nashobamed.org/weightcontrol).**

# Current Options in the Diagnosis and Management of Breast Cancer

**N**ext to skin cancer, it's the most common cancer that afflicts women. Statistically, one in eight women will get the unwelcome diagnosis at some point in life: breast cancer.

"The initial discovery of cancer may vary," says Jennifer Stone, MD, Nashoba Valley Medical Center's medical director of the Center for Cancer Care. "Women sometimes find a lump themselves. Other times, it will show up on a mammogram. Regardless, it's important to realize that abnormalities discovered in the breasts usually are not cancerous. However, the high number of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer makes it imperative that you follow up on any anomaly and have it reviewed by a qualified physician."

## Self-exams and Mammography

A self-exam is advisable for women ages 20 and older. Standing in front of a mirror, a woman should check for any changes in the shape and contours of each breast, any dimpling of the skin. While in the shower, apply pressure with your fingers to explore for any lumps, both near the skin or deeper. It's also important to check the region around the nipples for discharge. Contact your physician as soon as possible if you discover a lump or any discharge containing blood.

Mammography is an effective means of detecting an abnormality. The American Cancer Society recommends that women receive an annual mammogram beginning at age 40. As in all cancers, the key is to catch it in the early stages.

During a mammogram, each breast is compressed between two plates to enable the low-level X-rays to pass through the tissue. If a lump has the appearance of a tumor, a physician will often perform a biopsy – the insertion of a fine needle to extract cells for examination under a microscope.

## Treatment for Breast Cancer

Almost all breast cancer treatments involve a surgical procedure. The patient and the surgeon will have to decide which operation is best. Many patients can be treated adequately by the removal of the cancer itself, while some will require a mastectomy or removal of the entire breast. This operation no longer requires removal of the chest wall muscles as in the distant past. Some individuals choose bilateral or double mastectomies to prevent the development of cancer in the other breast.

Most breast cancer operations involve removing some or all of the lymph nodes under that arm. Usually, special techniques make it possible to remove only a few nodes, rather than the prior need to remove them all. This lessens the risk of nerve injury and arm swelling or lymphedema.

If just the cancer is removed rather than the entire breast, it is usually necessary to treat the remainder of that breast with radiation therapy.

Depending on the size of the cancer, the presence of involved lymph nodes and the biologic details of the cancer, a recommendation may be made for either intravenous chemotherapy or long-term oral anti-hormone medications. If the tumor is large, pre-operative chemotherapy may be recommended.

Finally, women who chose either single or bilateral mastectomy will be able to choose from several types of reconstructive surgery to replace the removed tissue and recreate the former appearance of the breasts.

## Catch it early!

As mentioned before, early detection of breast cancer is critical. Be vigilant. If you have any questions about cancer risks, diagnoses, treatment or living with the disease's aftermath, call your physician. You are the first line of defense against breast cancer.



## GET A 3D MAMMOGRAM WITHIN 48 HOURS

Nashoba Valley Medical Center offers quick access to the Hologic Selenia Dimensions 3D Mammography™, also known as 3D tomosynthesis. With this advanced technology, multiple images are taken and then converted into a stack of thin layers, allowing the radiologist to review the breast tissue one layer at a time. This enhanced imaging improves early detection of breast cancer.

If a suspicious area is seen on a mammogram, our breast experts use The Affirm™ upright system which offers the ability to perform either minimally-invasive stereotactic or tomosynthesis breast biopsy procedures right in the breast imaging suite. The upright system allows us to comfortably position the patient for biopsy, reproducing the same position used during the screening exam. This position allows greater accuracy in accessing the area of concern, resulting in a quicker procedure.

**To make an appointment, call 978-784-9272.  
The Women's Imaging Center is located at  
200 Groton Road in Ayer, Massachusetts.**

# Lung Cancer Screening – Should You Be Screened?

If you are a current or former smoker, you should talk to your doctor about whether lung cancer screening is right for you. Lung cancer can be detected using a screening test called Low-Dose CT scan (LDCT). It has the potential to detect lung cancer at earlier stages when it has the best chance of being cured.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death and the second most common cancer among both men and women in the United States, according to the Center for Disease Control. Each year, approximately 155,000 Americans lose their lives to lung cancer.

Annual lung cancer screening by Low-Dose CT in those that qualify has been proven to reduce the chances of dying from lung cancer by 20 percent and is recommended for men and women who meet the following criteria:

- A current smoker or have quit smoking within the past 15 years
- Have a tobacco smoking history of 30+ pack years (1 pack per day for 30 years or 2 packs per day for 15 years)
- Between the ages of 55-77\*
- Have no lung cancer symptoms such as a cough, shortness of breath or chest pain and no major medical issues that would prevent having a cancer work-up and treatments if discovered during screening

\*Some private insurance covers ages 55-80. Please check your plan for coverage.

## How can I get screened?

Talk to your doctor about your risk for lung cancer and discuss the risks and benefits of being screened. If you are eligible for lung screening, your doctor can refer you for an exam.

**To learn more about Nashoba Valley Medical Center's Low-Dose CT lung screening program, please call 978-784-9270.**

## Potential Lifesaving Lung Cancer Screening Offered at Nashoba Valley Medical Center

Nashoba Valley Medical Center (NVMC) provides lung cancer screenings to adult patients who are current or former smokers who meet specific criteria. NVMC's Low-Dose CT lung cancer screening is offered at its imaging and radiology department located at 200 Groton Road in Ayer.

Lung cancer screening looks for signs of the disease before there are any symptoms in patients who are at high risk. Low-Dose CT lung cancer screening uses state-of-the-art computed tomography (CT) to take pictures of the lungs to detect potentially treatable lung cancers.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., with more people dying of lung cancer than breast, colon and prostate cancers combined. The best action a current smoker can take to reduce their risk of lung cancer is to stop smoking. It is more effective than any test or intervention to reduce their risk.

Before scheduling a Low-Dose CT lung cancer screening, a patient should speak with their primary care physician or pulmonologist on whether the test will be beneficial.



# Battling Prostate Problems – A Fight You Can Win

**D**espite its walnut size and weight of just an ounce, the prostate plays a prominent role in a man's urinary and sexual health. The prostate produces fluid that is a component of semen. If the prostate is enlarged for any reason, it can press on the urethra and cause urinary problems. Symptoms of prostate disease include pain, burning and difficulty in urinating; blood in the urine or semen; painful ejaculation; and lower back pain.

“At some point in their lives, most men will be affected by prostate problems,” says Alexander Pang, MD, a Nashoba Valley Medical Center urologist. “Proper detection and treatment, however, can alleviate and even cure most prostate disorders.”

## Prostate Problems

Experts believe diet, race, heredity and the aging process may all lead to prostate trouble. The three most common problems associated with the prostate are:

- **Prostatitis.** This condition develops when the prostate swells or becomes inflamed, usually caused by bacterial infection.
- **Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).** A normal prostate can also grow many times in size when hormonal changes occur after age 40, causing BPH.
- **Prostate cancer.** Even though prostate cancer is one of the most diagnosed cancers in America, on average men have only a three percent risk of actually dying from the disease. Tumors are often slow-growing and highly treatable. However, patients sometimes experience no symptoms until the cancer has spread. Thus, early detection by your doctor is important.

“But sometimes, all that is needed is watchful waiting for slow-growing tumors for men over 70,” explains Dr. Pang. “Contact your doctor to see which treatment is right for you.”



## Many Treatment Options

Treatments for prostatitis and BPH include a low-fat diet and medications. Chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation target prostate cancer.

## Screening Guidelines

It's important for you to get your prostate checked. The American Urological Association recommends you discuss the benefits and limitations of these tests with your doctor:

- **A digital rectal exam (DRE):** Although some men consider this test embarrassing, it is a quick, simple procedure that could save your life.
- **A PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood test:** For men over 50 or earlier for men in high-risk groups, such as African-Americans or those with a family history of prostate problems.
- **ExoDx:** A new simple urine test that reduces the need for biopsy by up to 40 percent.

If you have a positive DRE or PSA, your doctor may order a biopsy to determine if cancer is involved.

“Most importantly, keep an open dialog with your doctor. There is no need to be embarrassed,” says Dr. Pang. “We have most likely heard before whatever you wish to discuss and will help to make it an easy discussion for you. You are not alone.”

**To schedule an appointment with Dr. Alexander Pang, call 978-772-6265.**

# Decoding Neurological Disorders

**“Because the nervous system is so vast, it can be vulnerable to numerous disorders,” explains Nashoba Valley Medical Center Neurologist Rania Elenein, MD. “A person’s nervous system can be damaged by trauma, infections, structural defects, tumors, blood flow disruption and autoimmune disorders.”**

**A**s with any complex system of the body, it can be more prone to complex conditions and disorders. One of the body’s most important systems, the nervous system is an intricate, sophisticated system that regulates and coordinates the body’s activities. It is made up of the central nervous system, which consists of the brain and spinal cord, and the peripheral nervous system that encompasses the peripheral nerves and the autonomic nerves.

In addition to the brain and spinal cord, major organs of the nervous system include the eyes, ears, sensory organs of taste, sensory organs of smell, and sensory receptors located in the skin, joints, muscles, and other parts of the body.

## Nervous System Disorders

Conditions and disorders of the nervous system may involve the following:

- Diseases caused by faulty genes, such as Huntington’s disease and muscular dystrophy
- Problems with the way the nervous system develops, such as spina bifida
- Degenerative diseases where nerve cells are damaged or die, such as Parkinson’s disease and Alzheimer’s disease
- Diseases of the blood vessels that supply the brain, such as stroke, TIA and brain hemorrhage
- Infection, including meningitis, encephalitis, poliomyelitis, and epidural abscess
- Injuries to the spinal cord and brain
- Seizure disorders, such as epilepsy
- Cancer, such as brain tumors
- Headaches
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), and Huntington chorea

## Be on Alert for Signs and Symptoms

Every person may experience nervous system disorder symptoms differently. The most common general signs and symptoms of a disorder include:

- Persistent or sudden onset of a headache
- A headache that changes or is different
- Loss of feeling or tingling
- Weakness or loss of muscle strength
- Loss of sight or double vision
- Memory loss
- Impaired mental ability
- Lack of coordination
- Muscle rigidity
- Tremors and seizures
- Back pain which radiates to the feet, toes, or other parts of the body
- Muscle wasting and slurred speech
- New language impairment (expression or comprehension)

Remember, the symptoms of a nervous system disorder may look like other medical conditions or problems. If you are concerned you may have a nervous system disorder, schedule an appointment with your health care provider. If you need immediate health care assistance, call 911.



## Nashoba Valley Medical Center Welcomes Neurologist Rania Elenein, MD to the Medical Staff

Board-certified Neurologist Rania Elenein, MD, recently joined Nashoba Valley Medical Center’s medical staff. Dr. Elenein specializes in all areas of neurology and has a special interest in neuromuscular diseases (like ALS, neuropathy and muscle diseases), multiple sclerosis and Parkinson’s disease.

**Dr. Elenein’s office is located at Nashoba Valley Medical Center, 190 Groton Road, Suite 210 in Ayer, Massachusetts. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Elenein, please call 978-796-5927.**

# WELCOMING NEW SPECIALISTS TO OUR COMMUNITY



**Rania Elenein, MD**  
Neurology and EMG

**Office Location:** Nashoba Valley Medical Center, 190 Groton Road, Suite 210, Ayer, 978-796-5927

**Board Certified:** Electrodiagnostic Medicine, Neuromuscular Medicine, Psychiatry and Neurology

**Areas of Special Interest:** Neurology, Neuromuscular Diseases, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease



**Sarosh Janjua, MD**  
Cardiovascular Medicine

**Office Location:** Nashoba Cardiology, 190 Groton Road, Suite 110, Ayer, 978-784-9425

**Board Certified:** Internal Medicine, Board Eligible in Cardiology

**Areas of Special Interest:** Cardiovascular Diseases, Stress Testing, Preventative Cardiology, Heart Disease in Women



**Michael Jiser, MD**  
General Surgery

**Office Location:** Ayer Surgical Office, 190 Groton Road, Suite 250, Ayer, 978-772-6265

**Board Certified:** American Board of Surgery

**Areas of Special Interest:** Bariatric Surgery, General Surgery, Minimally Invasive Surgery, Gastric Bypass, Sleeve Gastrectomy, Inguinal and Ventral Hernia Repair, Colon and Rectal Surgery, Foregut Surgery, Robotic Surgery



**Alexander Pang, MD**  
Urology

**Office Location:** Nashoba Valley Medical Center, 190 Groton Road, Suite 250, Ayer, 978-772-6265

**Board Certified:** Urology

**Areas of Special Interest:** Erectile Dysfunction, General Urology, Kidney Stones, Sexual Health



**Alfred Phillips, DPM**  
Podiatry

**Office Location:** Nashoba Valley Medical Center, 190 Groton Road, Suite 250, Ayer, 978-772-6265

**Board Certified:** Foot Surgery, Reconstructive Foot and Ankle Surgery

**Areas of Special Interest:** Complex Foot Fractures, Flat Foot Reconstruction, Pediatric Foot Problems, Revisional Foot Surgery, Diabetic Foot Ulcers/Charcot

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**DOCTORFINDER™**

For an appointment with physicians featured in this edition, please call DoctorFinder™ at **978-784-9990** for more information and to schedule an appointment.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### A.W.A.K.E- SLEEP SUPPORT GROUP

At each A.W.A.K.E (Alert, Well, and Keeping Energetic) sleep support group meeting, we focus on a specific topic and touch on the basics of sleep. Meetings are typically held every other month on the first Thursday of the month from 6-7 p.m.. To RSVP, please call Ana Pierre Philippe at 978-784-9399 or email [ana.pierrephilippe@steward.org](mailto:ana.pierrephilippe@steward.org). Class location is in the Founders Room at Nashoba Valley Medical Center, 200 Groton Road in Ayer.

Thursday, September 12

Thursday, November 7

### FREE SURGICAL WEIGHT LOSS INFORMATION SEMINARS

The Center for Weight Control at Nashoba Valley Medical Center offers both surgical and medical options and support services to help patients lead healthier lives and achieve weight loss goals. Attend a free Weight Loss Information Seminar to learn more about our surgical weight loss services.

Thursday, July 25 at 12 p.m.

Thursday, August 8 at 5 p.m.

Thursday, August 22 12 p.m.

All seminars are held at Nashoba Valley Medical Center's Founders Room, 200 Groton Road, Ayer. Call 978-862-LOSE (5673) to register or visit [www.nashobamed.org/events](http://www.nashobamed.org/events).

### DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

Our monthly support groups provide support and education to adults with diabetes. These classes include incorporating nutritional management and physical activity into your lifestyle, using medication safely, monitoring blood sugar, interpreting and using results, prevention, detection, and treatment of acute and chronic complications, and developing strategies to address psychosocial issues and promote health and behavior changes. Supports groups are set up as a series of five classes, which run throughout the year. A referral is required from your primary care physician.

**Wednesday Evenings, 4-5:30 p.m.**, in the Diabetes and Endocrine Center, 190 Groton Road, Ayer, Suite 150. For more information on specific dates, call 978-784-9534.

## A Message from the President



Dear Neighbor,

As president of Nashoba Valley Medical Center (NVMC), I am looking forward to building relationships and getting to know our patients, residents, and community leaders. Having worked with NVMC's finance department for more than ten years, I am already familiar with special care our hospital provides and am inspired how our highly skilled team of physicians, nurses and staff touch so many lives as they provide essential medical services to our community.

Within the last year, Nashoba Valley Medical Center (NVMC) has continued its mission of improving the health of the community. In continuing our commitment to provide our patients with some of the best health care services as well as a full range of specialty care and preventive screenings in the region, we have expanded our clinical services to include:

- A new Nashoba Sports and Physical Therapy facility in Groton that provides services in a state-of-the-art, brand-new gym with sport floor and equipped with the latest equipment, including the Hydro-Worx 300 Pool with Treadmill for aquatic therapy.
- The acquisition of the Hologic Selenia Dimensions 3D Mammography™ machine and the Affirm™ upright system. The advanced technology of 3D mammography provides enhanced imaging for our radiologists that aid in the early detection of breast cancer. If a suspicious area is seen on a mammogram, our breast experts now use the upright system which offers the ability to perform either minimally-invasive stereotactic or tomosynthesis breast biopsy procedures right in the breast imaging suite.

Along with expanding our clinical services, we have accomplished some quality milestones this year that highlight our dedication to health care. The Leapfrog Group honored NVMC with a fourth consecutive "A" grade in the Spring 2018 update to the Hospital Safety Score by The Leapfrog Group. These designations are made possible due to the commitment of our health care team who carry out our safety and quality initiatives every day.

Thank you for putting your trust and health care needs in our hands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Korry Dow".

Korry Dow  
President

**Nashoba Valley  
Medical Center**

A STEWARD FAMILY HOSPITAL

Steward