



# DISCOVERY

THE DISCOVERY EYE FOUNDATION



Fall 2014

The Discovery Eye Foundation supports research, education and advocacy related to sight-threatening eye diseases and their treatments, improving the quality of life for patients and their families.

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## Depression and Eye Disease

We work diligently to share the latest developments on eye disease and eye health through our newsletters and online media, providing up-to-date information on age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and keratoconus (KC), their treatments and ways to help deal with the diseases. In this newsletter, we are exploring a separate, though related, issue that affects many people dealing with debilitating eye disease: depression.



"I have heard psychologists talk about the classic Kübler-Ross stages of loss and grief in conjunction with losing your vision: It's like a death," says Judi Delgado, director of the Macular Degeneration Partnership (MDP). "It's good to acknowledge this is a major blow. It makes sense that people would have to

work through the process of grieving for the way they lived their lives before.”

Delgado and Catherine Warren, director of the National Keratoconus Foundation (NKCF), regularly get calls to their toll-free help lines from people experiencing sadness, depression and despair related to their disease. “People call in tears all the time,” Warren says. “They say: ‘I’m at my wit’s end. I can’t go on like this. My life is miserable.’”

A psychologist in Missouri, Dr. Roger Davis experienced depression firsthand following LASIK surgery, when he dealt with severe dry eye and ghosting — and the denial of their existence by his surgeon. “Anything that affects vision is going to affect mood tremendously,” Davis says. “Vision quality and quality of life are in a lockstep pattern.”

“These are chronic diseases,” Warren says. “Most patients go through at least a stage of being depressed, upset, anxious, worried. Not everyone realizes the emotional toll KC and AMD take.”

[Depression and Eye Disease cont'd...](#)

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## PROFILE

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### Dr. Kazuo Nihira Asks and Learns

Dr. Kazuo Nihira knows about research. When he came to Los Angeles from Japan half a century ago, it was to do graduate research work at Guilford Psychometric Laboratory at USC. After a stint as a researcher at the University of Kansas, where the weather inspired him “to stay indoors and concentrate” on his work, he took a position at UCLA, where he continued his research in developmental disabilities, teaching and advising graduate students until he retired about 10 years ago.





So when Nihira talks about the research reports he gets at [Macular Degeneration Partnership \(MDP\)](#) support-group meetings, he knows about what he speaks.

“I attend the support groups mostly for the presentations by Judi [Delgado, MDP’s executive director],” he says. “They are superb. Particularly after she goes to conventions and research meetings. She gives us reports, which are not only the most useful information, but the details and written summaries she gives us from the presentations are also superb. Coming to the support group and listening to Judi’s report is better than going to the meeting myself.”

[Dr. Kazuo Nihira cont'd...](#)

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## DEF NEWS

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### Blogging, Blogging, Blogging



The [DEF blog](#) continues to grow, and we don’t want you to miss out on this great source of information from leading doctors, researchers and eye-care professionals around the world.

What makes our blog stand out, though, are the stories from people just like you who are dealing with eye disease. We are very excited about some of the first-person narratives from those dealing with all kinds of issues associated with their vision loss — from rediscovering passions to battling depression to finding help in unexpected places. These posts are informative, honest and inspiring.

[Subscribe to the blog](#), so you don't miss a thing!

## New and Improved Macular Degeneration Website

The Macular Degeneration Partnership (MDP) unveiled its new website at [www.amd.org](http://www.amd.org). From more obvious controls for changing the contrast and font size, to a new function that allows the entire site to be translated into more than 75 different languages in one click, to better-organized research information, the new site makes it easier to find what you need.

New features include navigation menus with separate sections for wet AMD and dry AMD, a Resources section, videos and more complete details about current clinical trials.

"We restructured the entire site to reflect a more logical way of finding things," says Judi Delgado, director of MDP. "Everything was designed to be simpler and more helpful. It looks crisp and clean and much more streamlined."

We'd love to know what you think about the new site. Please [e-mail us](#) with your feedback.



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## EVERYDAY SOLUTIONS

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### Dealing with Dry Eye

Dry eye is a condition where the tear-producing glands and lipid glands in the eyelids dry up. Symptoms include:

- dryness, itchiness or burning
- eye fatigue and redness



- not being able to see clearly at the end of the day

Dry eye can be progressive and can interfere with vision if left untreated.

There are ways to protect your eyes and prevent dry eye:

- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes.
- Use preservative-free artificial tears or tear substitutes.
- Use a lubricating ointment.
- Keep away from air conditioning
- Use a humidifier to moisten air.
- Place a warm, damp washcloth across your eyelids for a few minutes morning and night.
- Eat Omega-3 fatty acids, or take fish oil supplements.
- Stay hydrated.

There are also many treatment options for dry eye, so if you are experiencing symptoms, a trip to your eye-care provider is in order. For more information on dry eye and tear dysfunction, visit our recent blog post, [Dry Eye and Tear Dysfunction](#).

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## GIFTS

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### Say it With a Tribute Gift

Not sure how to say, "Thank you," "Happy Birthday," "Happy New Year," or even, "Sorry for your loss"?

Consider making a personalized tribute gift of \$15 or more in someone's honor or memory. It is the perfect way to let someone how much they mean to you.

Your personal message not only will touch the hearts of your recipient, but it also provides a lasting gift for people with age-related macular degeneration or keratoconus. When people are diagnosed with eye disease, the prospect of



losing their vision is terrifying. By donating to Discovery Eye Foundation, you can make sure they get the information and personal help they need to take control of their eye disease. To learn more or send a tribute, visit [www.discoveryeye.org/tributes-memorials](http://www.discoveryeye.org/tributes-memorials).

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## NUTRITION

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### Pumpkin-Eater

It is almost pumpkin season: That wonderful time of the year when pumpkin patches start sprouting up everywhere, and the gourd become a standard decorating item.



It's worth remembering that this bright orange food is rich in carotenoids, including beta-carotene, which the body converts into a form of vitamin A that is good for your vision. It particularly helps your eyes in dim light, according to the National Institutes of Health. One cup of cooked, mashed pumpkin contains almost twice the recommended daily intake of vitamin A. And according to a study at Harvard University, it could slow the decline of retinal function in those with retinitis pigmentosa.

It's not just the "meat" of the pumpkin that is good for you; pumpkin seeds can boost your mood. The seeds are an excellent source of tryptophan, which is important in the production of serotonin, which can lift your mood. So a handful of roasted pumpkin seeds may help keep your spirits up during the stressful holiday season!

If you're looking for something new to do with your pumpkins, try our Eye Cook recipe for [Baked Pasta with Pumpkin Sauce and Spinach](#).

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### AARP Life@50+ National Event & Expo

**Sept. 4-6**

Meet us in sunny, sandy San Diego this year! We've got lots of fun stuff — and cool new giveaways — planned for the Macular Degeneration Partnership. [Find out more.](#)

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## Follow Us!

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