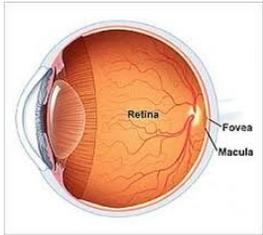


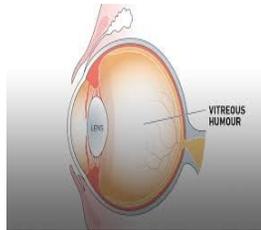
Background:



The retina is the layer of tissue in the back of the eye that receives light and communicates directly with the brain to form images. A healthy, intact retina gives

you clear vision.

Vitreous is a clear gel that fills the middle of the eye. Sometimes, tiny clumps of gel cast shadows on the retina, causing **floaters**, which you may see as small dots, specks or clouds moving in your field of vision. These floaters may be annoying, but they should not interfere with your sight.



A large floater, in certain types of light, can cast a slight shadow over your vision. You may notice floaters less as you learn to live with them. Very rarely do floaters become bad enough to require treatment.

Treatment:

- Floaters due to posterior vitreous detachment are harmless, and usually fade over time.
- These do not require treatment and surgery is rarely indicated.
- Vitamin therapy will not cure floaters.
- If they annoy you, try to get them out of your field of vision by looking up and down.

In the rare case where surgery is necessary, a vitrectomy will be performed, where the vitreous fluid will be replaced with a salt solution. There is a low risk of complications, such as:

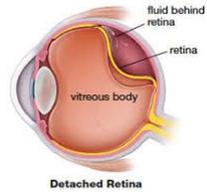
- Detached retina
- Cataracts
- Torn retina

Floaters can also be a sign of retinal tear, which, if left untreated, can lead to retinal detachment from the back of the eye. In this case, surgery will be needed.

Retinal Detachment:

Usually, the vitreous moves away from the retina without causing problems. However, sometimes it pulls hard enough to tear the retina in one or more places.

Fluid can pass through the retinal tear, lifting the retina off the back of the eye, in what is referred to as **retinal detachment**.



Retinal Detachment poses a very serious threat to vision.

Risks:

- Nearsightedness;
- Previous cataract, glaucoma or other eye surgery;
- Glaucoma medications that make the pupil small (like pilocarpine)
- Severe eye injury;
- Previous retinal detachment in the other eye;
- Family history of retinal detachment.

Treatment:

See your doctor right away if you experience any of the following **symptoms**:

- A sudden increase in size and number of floaters.
- A sudden appearance of flashes.
- Having a shadow appear in the periphery of your field of vision;
- Sudden decrease in vision.

Retinal detachment can be treated in your ophthalmologist's office, and are painless. They create a scar to prevent fluid from slipping behind the retina.

1. Laser surgery (photocoagulation)

With laser surgery, your ophthalmologist uses a laser to make small burns around the retinal tear. The scarring that results seals the retina to the underlying tissue, helping to prevent a retinal detachment.

2. Freezing treatment (cryopexy)

Your eye surgeon uses a special freezing probe to apply intense cold and freeze the retina around the retinal tear. The result is a scar that helps secure the retina to the eye wall.



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Floaters and Retinal Detachment

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