

Floater, Flashes and Posterior Vitreous Detachment (PVD) *(page 1 of 2)*

The vitreous space is located at the back of the eye between the lens and the retina. A vitreous detachment can occur as we age, when this happens the jelly-like vitreous changes. This can shrink back and pull free from the inside surface of the eye. This can be accompanied by light flashes and the appearance of a new black spot or floater.

This is not dangerous, but rarely it can be accompanied by more serious eye conditions such as retinal tears and vitreous haemorrhage (bleed). These occur when the strong attachments of the vitreous to the retina do not separate properly, tearing the retina or retinal blood vessels. It is suggested that anyone with recent symptoms of a vitreous detachment have an eye examination to make certain that a more serious problem is not present.

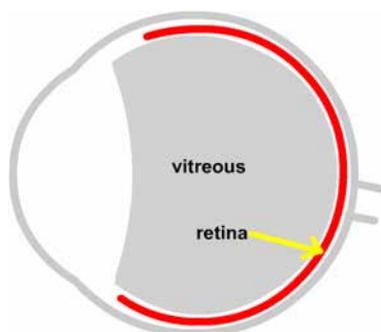
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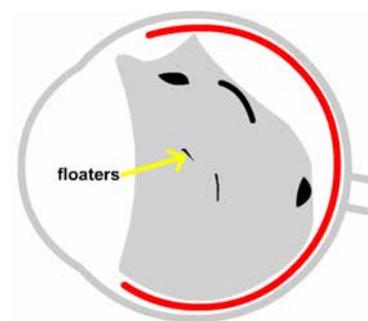
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The young eye with vitreous jelly attached



An older eye with PVD and floaters

Floater

Floater are not normally dangerous and are caused by tiny specks of tissue inside the vitreous. When light hits these pieces of tissue, it creates shadows on the retina that appear to float across your field of vision.

These specks may appear to be on the front surface of your eye, but they are actually inside. Except in rare circumstances, floaters are no cause for alarm and no treatment is necessary. However, a sudden increase in new floaters may indicate a problem, and an eye examination is recommended if this occurs.

Flashes

Occasionally, flashes of light are caused by other problems such as a migraine headache. When related to a headache, the flashes of light are seen in both eyes and usually last 20-30 minutes before the headache starts.

Eye Clinic (8 am - 5pm)
01722 336262 ext 5366

Signs and symptoms of floaters and flashes

- Black spots or “spider webs” that seem to float in the vision in a cluster or alone
- Spots that move or remain suspended in one place
- Flickering or flashing lights that are most prominent when looking at a bright background like a clear, blue sky.

Symptoms that may indicate a more serious problem

- suddenly not being able to see as well as normal, along with flashes and floaters.
- a veil or curtain that obstructs part or all of what you can see.
- a sudden increase in the number of floaters.

Detection and diagnosis

Tell your optician or doctor immediately if you notice a sudden shower of floaters, new light flashes, a veil or curtain obstructing your vision, or any other change.

Treatment

Treatment for uncomplicated PVD is rarely needed since floaters typically become less bothersome over a period of weeks to months as they settle below the line of sight. Due to the risks of cataract, infection or retinal damage, surgery or laser treatment is rarely indicated for PVD except when the floaters affect your sight. In these cases, surgical removal of the vitreous (vitrectomy) may be considered but only if your sight is significantly affected.