

It is important to remember that in most cases these symptoms are caused by vitreous detachment and this rarely causes any long term problems with your vision. However, because there is a small risk that these symptoms may be a sign of a retinal tear or detachment it is always best to seek advice urgently.

Contact your Optometrist or go to an accident and emergency department without delay if you notice any of the previous symptoms.

QMC EYE CASUALTY

Telephone: 0115 9249924 Ex 62882

If you have been diagnosed with a PVD it is very unlikely that you will develop a retinal detachment.

RETINAL TEAR OR RETINAL DETACHMENT

If the retina tears, it may come away from the back of the eye. This is called a retinal detachment. It can result in partial or complete loss of vision.

A tear may be treated by using a laser. If treated quickly, you may have a better chance of full recovery. However, if your retina has become detached, you will need surgery. The operation may restore most of your vision but may come too late for a full recovery.

Early diagnosis is essential to a good recovery.

FLOATERS &
POSTERIOR VITREOUS DETACHMENT

LOOK OUT FOR;
flashes or floaters getting worse
a black shadow in your vision
a sudden cloud of spots
a curtain or veil over your vision
any sudden loss of vision.

Go to an Accident and Emergency Department
without delay if you notice any of these symptoms

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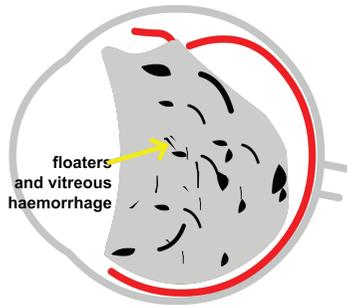


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POSTERIOR VITREOUS DETACHMENT (PVD)

The eye is filled with a clear jelly-like substance called the vitreous gel, which as we age, becomes more watery, less jelly-like and isn't able to keep its usual shape. As a result, it begins to move away from the retina at the back of the eye. This natural change is called a PVD.



Over 75 per cent of the population over the age of 65 develop a PVD, and it is not uncommon for it to develop in someone's 40s or 50s. PVD is not a sign of a disease or eye health problem. For most of us a PVD happens naturally as we get older.

FLOATERS

Floaters can take lots of different forms and shapes and can come in different sizes. You may see them as dots, circles, lines, clouds, or cobwebs. Floaters usually move around in your eye and you may find floaters are more obvious in bright light or on a sunny day.



They often appear when the vitreous in the main part of the eye gets older. A floater is created when the vitreous becomes more watery and small, harmless clumps of cells develop and float in the more watery vitreous.

The light rays, which normally travel from the front of the eye, meet a clump in the vitreous and it casts a shadow on the retina at the back of the eye. We see this shadow as a floater.

Floaters will become less obvious or go away with time, or your brain will learn to ignore them.

Floaters are very common, and many people have floaters even if they do not have PVD or an eye condition.

SYMPTOMS OF PVD

PVD can cause symptoms such as **floaters**, little **flashes of light**, or a **cobweb effect** across your vision. The degree of symptoms varies from person to person.

Small flashes of light can be visible when the vitreous pulls away from the back of the eye. The movement of the vitreous away from the retina at the back of the eye creates a tug on the retina. The retina reacts by sending a small electrical charge to your brain. You see this as short, small, flashes of light. These differ from the visual disturbance which can occur with migraine.

Importantly, these same symptoms can be an indication of a more serious problem, such as a retinal tear, which needs urgent attention. You will not be able to tell the difference between floaters and flashes caused by PVD or retinal detachment. The only way you can tell is to have your eyes examined by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. If you suddenly experience any of the following symptoms, make sure you have your eyes examined as soon as possible - preferably on the same day or within 24 hours:

- a sudden appearance of floaters or an increase in their size and number
- flashes of light and/or a change/increase in the flashing lights you experience
- blurring of vision
- a dark 'curtain' moving up, down or across your vision, as this may mean that the retina has already partially detached.