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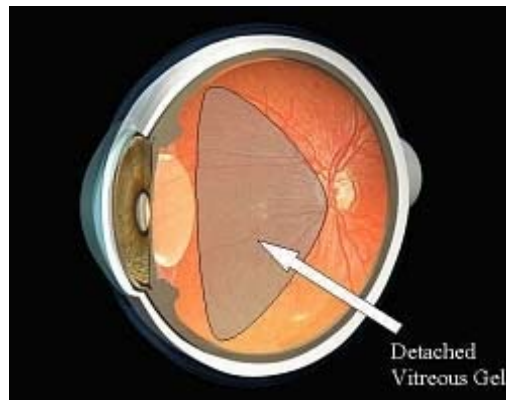
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## Patient Information: Posterior Vitreous Detachment

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The inside of the eye contains a jelly-like substance called the vitreous. Throughout life this fills the inside of the eye, pressing against the retina. With age this vitreous jelly changes and begins to turn into liquid. When this happens it can move away from the retina, and you will notice it as particles or floaters in the vision, occasionally associated with some flashing lights. This process is very common and in the majority of cases, although irritating, is not serious. However, if you notice floaters or flashes of light for the first time it is very important that you contact an ophthalmologist urgently to exclude the development of an associated retinal tear.



**Detached Vitreous Gel**

Unfortunately the jelly can occasionally pull on the retina and cause a retinal tear. This is a potentially serious condition, as it may progress to a retinal detachment, which can result in damage to your vision. It is extremely important that if you have sudden onset of flashes or floaters that you present promptly to an eye surgeon as a minor procedure in the outpatient department using either laser therapy or cryotherapy can treat the retinal tear and avoid major surgery and the risk of visual loss.”

In the majority of people the floaters fade over a few months and become less troublesome. However, in some patients the floaters persist, obscuring central vision and causing intermittent difficulty with reading. In these patients it is possible to remove the floaters via vitrectomy surgery. This usually results in complete resolution of symptoms. As vitreoretinal surgical techniques have improved over recent years the risk associated with the surgery and the post-operative pain and discomfort has decreased dramatically..It is, therefore, now entirely reasonable that if you are suffering persistent disturbance of your vision from the floaters sufficient to interfere with normal activities, such as reading, that vitrectomy surgery is carried out to remove the floaters and vitreous debris.

### **Warning signs**

#### **Please contact an Ophthalmologist promptly if:**

You notice a sudden rush of floaters

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A sudden change in, or loss of, vision occurs - or a dark shadow or curtain appears in your vision

You notice more flashing lights

#### **This is important as a retinal detachment may have occurred.**

***Disclaimer** The information provided in this document is intended as a useful aid to general practitioners, optometrists and patients. It is impossible to diagnose and treat patients adequately without a thorough eye examination by a qualified ophthalmologist, optometrist or your general practitioner. Hopefully the information will be of use prior to and following a consultation which it supplements and does not replace.*

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