

We believe that healthy vision is an essential part of your active and healthy lifestyle.



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This pamphlet is not intended as a substitute for a medical examination by a qualified physician. For more detailed information about floaters and flashes and the treatment possibilities, speak to your doctor.

Learn More About
**Floaters and
Flashes**



Floaters and Flashes

What are Floaters?

Floaters are small specks or “clouds” moving around in your field of vision, which are tiny clumps of protein inside the Vitreous (the clear gel-like fluid that fills the inside of the eye).

Floaters are often seen when looking at a plain background like a blank white wall or the blue sky. While these floaters look like they are in front of the eye, they are actually inside the eye. You are seeing the shadows of the tiny protein clumps on the retina.



Floaters

Floaters can appear in different shapes, such as cobwebs, clouds, circles, lines or little dots.

What are Flashes?

Flashes occur when the vitreous gel rubs or pulls on the retina. When this occurs, you may see flashing lights or lightning streaks. These flashes of light can appear off and on for several weeks or even months. It is common to see them more often as you age.



Flashes

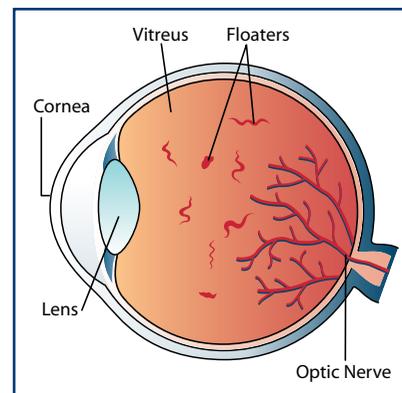
If these flashes appear suddenly, contact your ophthalmologist, because you may have a torn retina.

What Causes Floaters?

A common cause of floaters is a posterior vitreous detachment. This occurs when the vitreous gel pulls away from the back of the eye. Posterior vitreous detachments are common in those who are nearsighted, had cataract or YAG laser surgery, or inflammation inside the eye. Most, if not all of us will experience floaters if we are fortunate to have enough birthdays.

Rarely, as the shrinking vitreous gel pulls away from the wall of the eye, the retina can tear, causing a small amount of bleeding in the eye that may look like floaters.

A torn retina is a serious problem and may lead to retinal detachment. If you see new floaters that appear suddenly, see sudden flashes of light or a black curtain (veil) blocking your vision, call your eye doctor immediately.



Treatment Options

Some floaters are harmless and tend to fade with time or become less bothersome and require no treatment. Some floaters are caused by a tear in the retina. If the tear is not treated, the retina may detach from the back of the eye. A detached retina is corrected with retinal surgery. Those who have experienced floaters for years should schedule an eye exam if new floaters or flashes are noticed.

Learn The Risks and Benefits of Treatment

Floaters and flashes are usually harmless and may fade over time or become less bothersome. However, they may be a symptom of a more serious eye condition. Surgery to remove floaters is almost never required. Vitamin therapy will not cause floaters to disappear.

Even if you have had floaters for years, you should schedule an eye examination at regular intervals to check your eye health.

Restrictions

During the onset of new floaters or an increase of floaters, it is recommended that you limit the amount of weight you lift during the first week.