



Posterior Vitreous Detachment Information Sheet

What Is It?

There is a clear gel inside your eye called the vitreous. As you age, the gel becomes softer and can pull away from the back of the eye. This is called a “posterior vitreous detachment.” It is very common, and most people never notice it. If you do notice symptoms, it is important to get your eyes checked to make sure the back of your eye is healthy.

What Are the Symptoms?

You may notice:

- New floaters: small shapes or lines that move when you move your eyes
- Flashes of light: quick flickers or sparks in your side vision

These are easiest to see when looking at something bright, like a white wall or blue sky.

Is It Serious?

Usually not. Most people do not have any lasting problems. In some cases, it can cause a small tear in the retina (the layer at the back of the eye that helps you see). That is why it is important to get your eyes checked by a doctor if you have these symptoms.

What Will the Eye Doctor Do?

- You will have a dilated eye exam to check the back of your eye
- If no tear is found, no treatment is needed
- If a tear is found, it may be treated with a laser
- If a big tear or detachment of the retina is found, surgery may be needed

What to Expect Over Time

- Floaters gradually fade or become less distracting
- Flashes usually go away within a few weeks
- You may need a follow-up exam, especially if symptoms change



When to See Your Eye Doctor

Get seen right away if you notice:

- A sudden increase in floaters
- Flashes that are new or getting worse
- A dark shadow in part of your vision
- Sudden blurry or lost vision in one eye

These can be signs of a retinal tear or detachment, which need urgent care.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is it the same as a retinal detachment?

A: No. Most cases are harmless. But they can sometimes lead to a tear or detachment of your retina, which is why they should be checked by an eye doctor.

Q: Will my floaters go away?

A: They often fade with time or become less distracting.

Q: Do I need to avoid certain activities?

A: Usually, you do not need to. Your eye doctor will guide you based on your case.

This document was reviewed by Dr. Steve Arshinoff.