



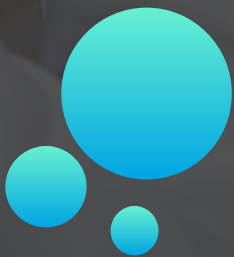
**FLASHES AND FLOATERS**  
**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**



**evolutio**



# FLASHES AND FLOATERS





## WHAT ARE FLOATERS?

Inside your eye there is a clear jelly called the vitreous. As we age this jelly becomes watery and breaks down.

This can cause you to see small dark or clear spots or lines which can move in your vision.

These are known as floaters, and they appear to float in front of your eyes and move when you try to look at them. Floaters can be more noticeable in bright lights or when looking at a white wall or clear sky.

They are very common and are normally harmless.

// Floaters can be more noticeable in bright lights or when looking at a white wall or clear sky.

# WHAT ARE FLASHES?

When we are young the vitreous sticks strongly to the back of the eye.

When the vitreous ages it pulls away from the back of the eye, as this happens you might see flashes of light in one or both of your eyes.

These flashes can look like tiny sparkles, lightning, or fireworks.

They are usually at the edges of what you can see, come and go and don't block your vision.

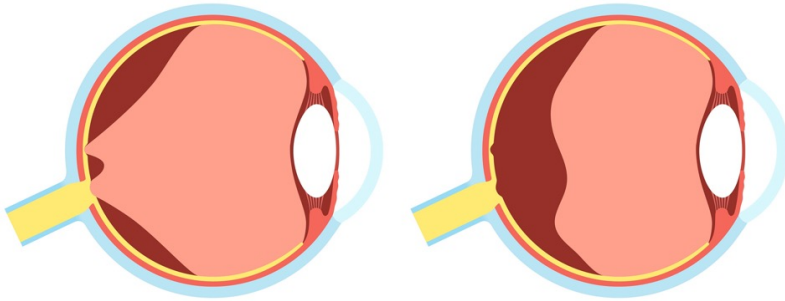
They are not the same as the shiny or zig-zag lines you might see if you have a headache called a migraine.

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# WHAT IS A VITREOUS DETACHMENT?

If you notice flashes of light or new floaters in your vision you maybe noticing a change in the vitreous.

The vitreous maybe pulling away from the back of the eye, the retina. This is known as a posterior vitreous detachment (PVD) and is common when you get older.



Flashes and Floaters are more common with age and in higher short-sighted people or those who have had eye surgery.

You may notice the flashing lights more when its dark and they can take a few months to settle. Floaters do not go away but your brain usually ignores them with time.



# WHAT IS A RETINAL DETACHMENT?

At the back of your eye is a screen called the retina and its role is to capture light that enters the eye and convert it into images that you can see. Many conditions can affect the retina.

A retinal detachment is when the retina starts to peel away from where it is supposed to be. When the retina peels away, it can cause flashing lights, floaters and changes to your vision, which makes it hard to see.

// ...can cause flashing lights, floaters and changes to your vision, which makes it hard to see.

# WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

It is really important to see an eye specialist as soon as possible to check the health of your eyes if you notice new flashes or floaters.

Your clinician will examine your eyes to check the health.

// It is really important to see an eye specialist as soon as possible

This may include dilating your pupils (making them bigger) with eye drops, so they can look at the back of your eyes more easily.

The dilating drops usually take 6-8 hours to wear off, so it is advisable not to drive or do tasks that require good vision that day.

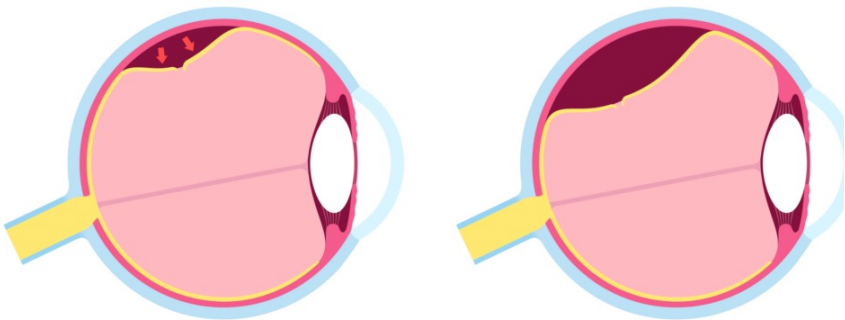
# WHEN IS TREATMENT REQUIRED?

If your clinician advises your eye is healthy or you have a posterior vitreous detachment usually no treatment is required.

Occasionally when the vitreous pulls away from the retina it can cause a hole, tear or detachment.

This will be noted by the clinician on the dilated eye examination.

If the clinician advises you have a retinal tear or detachment, you will be sent to see an eye surgeon who can perform surgery or laser to help repair your retina.





# REASONS TO VISIT YOUR CLINICIAN:

- A sudden increase in new floaters or flashing lights
- Noticing lots of new small spots especially after an injury to the head or eye
- A shadow, cobweb or veil covering your vision
- Loss in vision or sudden changes in your vision

If you notice any new floaters, flashing lights or something in the way of your vision you should see your clinician as soon as possible or attend an eye casualty department.

// Take care of  
your eyes by  
continuing with  
regular eye tests





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