

Oxford Eye Hospital

Posterior Vitreous Detachment

Information for patients



Posterior Vitreous Detachment

The eye doctor has examined your eyes today and has diagnosed a condition known as posterior vitreous detachment.

The vitreous is a transparent gel which fills the back of the eyeball. With age, the vitreous gel shrinks and separates itself from part of the retina (the light-sensitive layer at the back of the eye).

Signs and Symptoms

You may notice black 'floaters' (e.g. little dots, lines or circles) in your vision, which move with the eye and then settle as the eye rests. You may also be aware of flashing lights, like little flickers of light in the edge of the eye. To look at, the eye will appear normal.

If you notice an increase in floaters, new floaters in your vision, or if you notice a portion of your visual field missing, like a curtain coming across, this may be a warning of a retinal detachment (tear in the retina) and you should see a specialist as soon as possible.

Treatment

There is no treatment for posterior vitreous detachment. However, as the symptoms are linked to those of a retinal detachment, a clinical examination by an Ophthalmologist is advised within a few days of the onset of symptoms. In the vast majority of cases no treatment is necessary; we can only reassure you that the symptoms will resolve.

The floaters will never really disappear but, in time, you will start to get used to them and notice them less. This is because the brain starts to adapt and in time is able to ignore them.

The flashing lights should gradually settle down over the next few weeks.

Further information and support

If you have any questions concerning your eye condition or treatment, please do not hesitate to contact the Eye nurses on:

Telephone: **(01865) 234800** Eye Emergency

or

Telephone: **(01865) 231117** Eye Out-Patients Department

You may also find information on the RNIB website helpful:
www.rnib.org.uk

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

Rebecca Turner, Matron for Speciality Surgery
Version 2, June 2011
Review, June 2014
Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust
Oxford OX3 9DU
www.oxfordradcliffe.nhs.uk

OMI 3265