

Floaters are extremely common over the age of the age of 65, with 50% of over 65 experiencing floaters.

Early stage of floaters can be extremely worrying.

### **Symptoms**

In some cases, the only noticeable symptom is a sudden appearance of a floater.

In most cases, the floater can be preceded by or accompanied by flashing lights.

### **Symptoms of may include:**

- ⤴ discoloured spots (known as floaters that 'float' in your field of vision)
- ⤴ Floaters which moves around in your field of vision and may be like a cobweb, a fly, a tadpole or any other random shape
- ⤴ Flashing lights

### **Why do floaters form?**

Over time, the jelly of the eye undergoes changes. Some parts of the jelly of the eye become thinner and some other parts become thicker. The jelly which previously was well formed breaks up and separates from the retina. The separation phase can cause the symptoms of flashes. You may expect the flashes phase to last up to a few months after which they will subside.

The floaters will persist but will become less noticeable as your brain gets used to them.

### **Can they be treated?**

In most instances, floaters are not treated. Your brain simply adapts to their presence and ignores them.

Occasionally, if floaters become troublesome, an operation called Vitrectomy may be offered. This is major surgery and has its own risks. You should talk to your doctor and carefully consider this option.

### **Can floaters cause further problems?**

In 1 % to 10% of patients (depending on the risk factors), floaters can be a sign of a problem called a retinal tear or a retinal detachment. The likelihood of this particular problem depends on some

risk factors which may or may not be present in your eye.

A retinal tear or a retinal detachment is a serious problem that can cause blindness.

A retinal tear or detachment may require urgent laser treatment or surgical treatment or both. The urgency depends upon the size of the tear and the amount of retinal detachment.

### **What should I do if I notice floaters?**

You should go to your local eye doctor and have a full eye check up called dilated fundal examination. Your pupils will be dilated (and vision becomes blurred for a few hours), and then the doctor will examine your retina and vitreous.

### **What are the danger signs?**

If you notice:

- New floaters
- Flashing lights
- Visual loss
- Visual field loss
- A curtain falling on your eye through which you cannot see

If you notice any of the above, see your eye doctor immediately.

Seek medical advice if you experience any new eye problems following treatment.

**Disclaimer:** This information leaflet is produced to help increase awareness regarding floaters. It is not intended to replace professional medical advice or to provide advice in any special individual circumstance. Please seek expert medical advice regarding your specific medical condition.

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