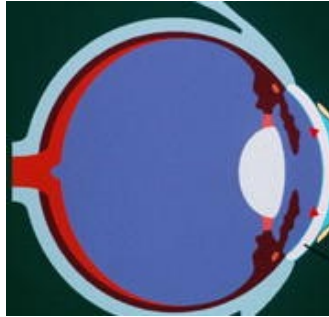


Posterior Vitreous Detachments (PVD) Floaters and Flashes

What Are Floaters?

Often, people who have healthy eyes see floaters. They appear as spots, lines or cobweb effects, usually when looking at a plain surface such as a white wall or clear blue sky. They often appear as the clear jelly (vitreous) filling the main part of your eye becomes older. These posterior vitreous detachments (PVDs) are innocuous.



What Are Flashes?

As the vitreous jelly in the eye shrinks (PVD) it can tug on the retina (the light sensitive layer) at the back of the eye. This can cause flashes of light at the edge of your vision. These differ from the flashes that occur with migraine.

When Should I Be Concerned?

Unfortunately flashes and floaters can also be a sign of retinal tears as well as simple PVDs. If you suddenly notice a shower of new floaters, or floaters along with flashes, or a dark shadow or 'curtain' in your vision, then you should seek advice urgently. These symptoms might mean the retina is tearing.

What Will Happen If The Retina Tears?

The retina is at the back of the eye. It receives the images and then sends them to the brain. This is one of the things that enables you to see. If the retina tears, it may come away from the back wall of the eye. This is called a 'Retinal Detachment'. It can result in partial or complete loss of vision, so prompt attention is essential.

How Is A Retinal Detachment Treated?

A tear may be treated by using a laser. If your retina has become detached, you will need surgery. The surgery may restore most of your vision but if there has been a long delay before seeking help, this may come too late for full recovery. So the sooner it is detected the better. Remember: **Do Not Delay.**

What Should I Do If Concerned?

If we are open you can come straight to the practice. If you phone our practice and describe the symptoms, the receptionist will advise you to come in immediately. Do not make a routine appointment which might take several days. The optometrist will need to put drops in your eyes to make your pupils larger for a better examination (afterwards you may find driving difficult). If the optometrist believes there is a problem he/she will send you directly to the Ophthalmology Department at the RVI, with a referral letter, after first phoning them.

Since we are not funded, as yet, by the NHS for these extended services there may be a charge. If we are not open or if you do not wish to pay the necessary charges then you should go to the accident and emergency department of the RVI.

LOOK OUT FOR :

- Flashes or floaters getting worse
- A black shadow in your vision
- A sudden cloud of spots
- A curtain or veil over your vision
- Any sudden loss of vision