



RETINA VITREOUS ASSOCIATES
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Retinal Detachment

What is a Retinal Detachment?

The retina is the light-sensitive layer of tissue that lines the inside of the eye and sends visual messages through the optic nerve to the brain. When the retina detaches, it is lifted or pulled from its normal position toward the center of the eye. Surgery is needed to repair the retina, attempt to restore as much vision as possible, and prevent permanent vision loss.

What are the symptoms of a Retinal Detachment?

Symptoms may include a sudden or gradual increase in either the number of floaters, which are little “cobwebs” or specks that float about in your field of vision, and/or light flashes in the eye. Another symptom is the appearance of a dark curtain or veil over the field of vision.

Why did my retina tear and detach?

In most instances, very small areas of the retina are torn and allow fluid from the interior of the eye to track under the retina, peeling it off the eye wall. The tears themselves arise from internal traction on the retina that exerts a force on the retina that is greater than this tissue can withstand. This typically follows a separation of the vitreous gel from its attachment to the retina in the back of the eye.

What are the risk factors for Retinal Detachment?

A retinal detachment can occur at any age, but it is more common in people over age 40 and is more likely to occur in people who:

- Are very nearsighted
- Have had a retinal detachment in the other eye
- Have a family history of retinal detachment
- Have had prior eye surgery or an eye injury
- Have other eye conditions, like lattice degeneration

Will surgery be necessary?

If the retinal detachment is small and limited to the retinal periphery, procedures may be performed in an office setting and may include pneumatic retinopexy, laser, and cryopexy. Many cases of retinal detachment require a surgical procedure called a vitrectomy, scleral buckle or both to reattach the retina as an outpatient procedure that is performed in an operating room. The appropriate timing for when to perform surgery can be critical for visual outcome. Each detachment is different; some are more emergent than others. Your physician will discuss the best surgery method for you, risks and benefits, and when it should be performed. While there is no guarantee for visual improvement, the retina can be reattached and vision preserved in most cases.