

Posterior vitreous detachment

Eye Clinic
Tel: 01271 322467

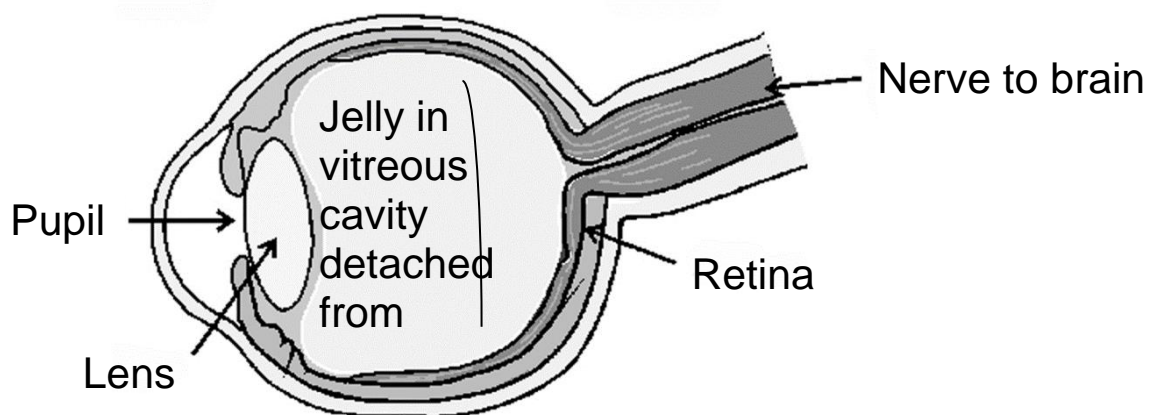
Other formats

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What is posterior vitreous detachment?

Posterior vitreous detachment is a common degenerative change that affects the vitreous jelly in the one or both eyes in many people after middle age.

The vitreous is a jelly-type filling in the eye. In a posterior vitreous detachment, the vitreous shrinks and dislodges forwards in the eye. As the vitreous pulls away from its attachments at the retina, the light receptors in the retina are then stimulated, this causes flashes of light to be seen.



The retina lines the back of the eye to collect visual images and send them to the brain. Changes in the vitreous cast shadows on the retina and are seen as floaters in the vision.

What are the symptoms?

Flashing lights and black floaters in the vision.

How is it treated?

There is no treatment for a posterior vitreous detachment and you should not experience any visual loss from a posterior vitreous detachment.

The flashing lights will stop in time as the vitreous jelly becomes completely detached from the retina, the occasional floater may remain. You should become less aware of your floaters over time.

Occasionally the vitreous pulls a hole in the retina; this is more common if you are short-sighted, though this may also happen to normal sighted people. Retinal holes are treated in the eye clinic with laser treatment to prevent the retinal hole leading to a retinal detachment, to prevent the need for surgery.

How do I recognise a retinal detachment?

If you have developed a retinal detachment you may notice:

- Increased floaters
- Increased flashing lights
- Persistent black shadows at the edges of your vision in one eye
- Curtain effect over part of your vision, that you cannot see through.

If you notice any of the above symptoms, you are advised to seek urgent medical advice by contacting your optician, GP or the eye clinic.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns please ask any member of the medical or nursing team or contact the Eye Clinic, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 1pm.

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PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

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