

Floaters and Flashes

However, if you experience a sudden episode of floaters and flashes, particularly if this is followed by a dark shadow blocking a corner of your vision, you should consult your ophthalmologist immediately. Timely treatment with a laser or, in severe cases, surgery can help to prevent severe vision loss.

LOCATION MAP



This patient information leaflet is a general guide to help patients understand specific eye conditions, treatment or tests. The information does not replace the need for individual advice from an ophthalmologist. Please consult with your ophthalmologist about your specific eye condition and/or concerns.

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FLOATERS
AND FLASHES

UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT FLOATERS AND FLASHES



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Floaters and Flashes

What are floaters and flashes?

Floaters are flying flies or dots that you may sometimes see moving in your field of vision. They are tiny clumps of cells inside the vitreous (a gel-like fluid) that fills the inside cavity of your eye. While you may get the feeling that these spots or lines are in front of your eye, in reality they are actually floating inside it. These clumps cast shadows on the retina — the layer of cells lining the back of the eye that allows you to see — giving you the impression of floating particles in your vision.

Flashes are the illusion of flashing lights or lightning streaks that occur when the vitreous gel inside your eye rubs or pulls on the retina. They can be a small flash in just one spot, or it can be several flashes across a wider area of vision.



Normal vision



Vision with floaters



Vision with flashes

What causes floaters and flashes?

Floaters and flashes may occur at the same time due to the degeneration of the vitreous gel as you age. Eye injuries or excessive rubbing of the eyes can result in floaters as well. In the situation where the degenerated vitreous pulls away from the retina and tears it, slight bleeding in the eye will occur and this may appear as a group of new floaters.

Several retinal tearing may develop into retinal detachment, resulting in visual loss.

What can I do to prevent floaters and flashes?

There is no known prevention for floaters and flashes which are usually quite harmless. Flashes usually diminish with time although the floaters may remain. It is therefore important to maintain good eye health and have your eyes checked regularly.

What kinds of treatment are available for floaters and flashes?

Floaters and flashes rarely lead to any serious complications and hence no treatment is required in general. The effect of floaters can be minimised by wearing dark glasses when you are out in the bright sunlight or when you are looking at a brightly lit surface. Flashes usually disappear with time.