

# Floaters and Flashes in Your Eyes

## Floaters and Flashes

Floaters look like tiny specks or spots that move across your field of vision. They are most noticeable in bright light, either indoors or out. Flashes look like bursts of bright light.

Floaters and flashes can occur at any age and are normally harmless. In some cases, they can be a sign of a retinal tear. If not treated promptly, a torn retina can lead to a detached retina and severe loss of vision.

Floaters and flashes develop from changes in the vitreous humor (the fluid inside your eye). If the vitreous starts to shrink, it pulls away from your retina and small clumps break loose.

The clumps of vitreous are the floaters you see in your field of vision. If the shrinking vitreous pulls away or tugs at your retina, you may see flashes of light.

Normal floaters and flashes may never disappear completely. They may become less noticeable over time, however.

## Signs of a Torn or Detached Retina

Call your eye care provider right away if you have signs of a retinal tear or detachment:

- many new floaters or flashes of light suddenly appearing
- loss of side (peripheral) vision
- blurred or distorted vision.

## Detecting Floaters and Flashes

During an eye exam, your eye care provider will dilate your eyes and look inside of them. He or she can tell if the floaters and flashes are normal. If there are signs of a torn or detached retina, your provider will recommend treatment to prevent further damage to your eye. A detached retina may require surgery.