

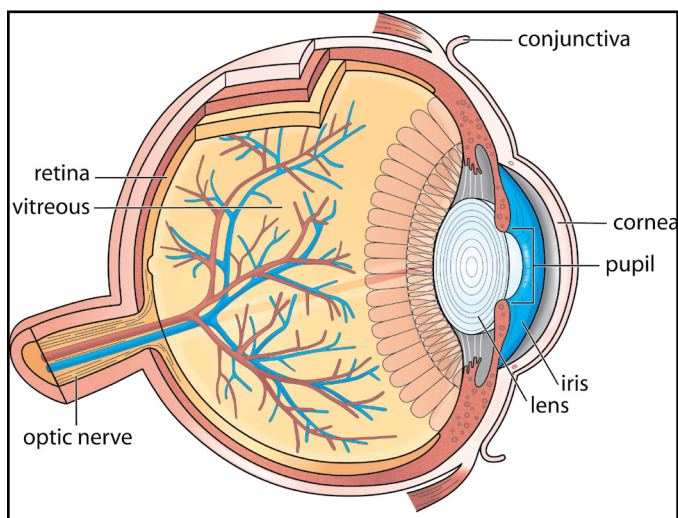
Retinal Detachment

General Information

Your retina is a thin layer of tissue located in the back of your eye. It sends visual signals (lights and images) to your brain through your optic nerve.

If your retina is pulled or lifted from its normal position, it may separate from the layer of blood vessels beneath it and detach. Small tears in your retina may also lead to a detached retina.

A detached retina is a medical emergency. It needs to be treated by an eye care professional. **If not promptly treated, a detached retina can lead to permanent vision loss.**



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Retinal detachment is a medical emergency. It can lead to permanent vision loss if not treated promptly.

Those at Risk for Retinal Detachment

People more likely to have a detached retina include those who:

- are middle-aged or older (retinas can thin as people age)
- are nearsighted
- have already had a detached retina
- have a family history of retinal detachment
- have had cataract surgery
- have a head or eye injury or an eye disease such as a tumor, diabetes or retinal swelling.

Signs of Retinal Detachment

Retinal detachment is normally painless. You may notice either a sudden or gradual increase in floaters or flashes of light. Your field of vision may look like there is a curtain over it.

Diagnosing Retinal Detachment

Special instruments are needed to diagnose a detached retina. See your eye care provider promptly if you have signs of this eye emergency.

(over)

Treating Retinal Detachment

- Surgical procedures that may require a hospital stay:
 - **pneumatic retinopexy**
a gas bubble is injected into the eye to push the retina back in place
 - **scleral buckling**
a tiny synthetic band is placed on the outside of the eye to push the eye wall against the retina
 - **vitrectomy**
the vitreous (clear gel inside the eye) is removed and replaced with a salt solution.
- Office procedures for small holes or tears:
 - **laser surgery**
a laser beam seals the retina back in place
 - **freezing (cryopexy)**
seals holes or tears in the retina.

You may have more than one kind of procedure to treat a detached retina.

Preventing Retinal Detachment

See your eye care provider on a regular basis if you:

- are very nearsighted
- have a family history of retinal detachment.

Treating holes and tears promptly can help prevent retinal detachment.

**Information adapted in part from
the National Eye Institute.**