
Seeing Spots or Floaters

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Floaters are shapes or lines that people see moving around in their vision. These can appear as small dots, blobs, or strands, in one or both eyes.

What causes floaters?

The eye is filled with a jelly-like material called the 'Vitreous'. As you grow older, strands of a protein called collagen grow inside the vitreous, due to it either shrinking or thickening.

When you move your eyes, these strands move too, appearing as floaters in your vision.

Are floaters serious?

This is usually nothing to be worried about, especially if they have been there for a long time. But, in some people, usually over the age of 40, moving the eye causes the vitreous to pull away from a part at the back of the eye called the 'retina'. This can cause you to see 'flashes' of light in your vision, and this is called a 'posterior vitreous detachment' (PVD).

If you see flashes in your vision, especially if this is accompanied by an increase in floaters, you should visit your eye doctor or public hospital emergency department urgently. Doctors must confirm whether or not your retina has been pulled away off the back of the eye. This is called 'retinal detachment', and can lead to loss of vision.

