

Additional Notes

Empty box for additional notes.

# Vitreous floaters and Posterior Vitreous Detachment

## The Eye Unit

Telephone Contact Numbers  
Eye Unit Acute Referral Clinic  
Helpline: **0300 019 4181**  
between 8am and 6pm

**The Eye Unit**, The Royal Bournemouth Hospital,  
Castle Lane East, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH7 7DW

Author: **Julie Tillotson** Date: **November 2020** Version: **Seven**  
Review date: **November 2023** Ref: **035/21**

t: 01202 303626 w: [www.uhd.nhs.uk](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk)

: @UHD\_NHS : @UHTrust : @uhd\_nhs

t: 01202 303626 w: [www.uhd.nhs.uk](http://www.uhd.nhs.uk)

: @UHD\_NHS : @UHTrust : @uhd\_nhs

## Vitreous Floaters

It is very common to have Floaters or spots before the eyes.

The onset can be gradual or sudden and can affect either one or both eyes. The floaters are often described in various ways.

- Spots
- Soot particles
- Spiders
- Cobwebs
- Worms
- Threads

They continue to move after the eye has come to rest or they may move with the eye - hence the name 'floaters'.

## What are Floaters?

The eyeball contains a jelly-like substance called vitreous. In early life this is loosely attached to the surface of the retina, In middle age or earlier in short sighted people, the vitreous jelly may come away from the retina causing a Posterior Vitreous Detachment (PVD). Occasionally when the vitreous comes away it can make a hole or tear. A retinal tear would need laser treatment to prevent further retinal problems.

Many people have floaters and can see small specks when looking at a white background. Floaters do not indicate a serious eye problem. There is no treatment, but people do learn to live with them. They become less noticeable as the brain becomes accustomed to them: this can take months.

## What will happen in the Acute Referral Clinic?

A nurse will test your vision, and take details of your medical and ophthalmic history. They will examine your eyes and put drops into both your eyes to dilate or enlarge the pupils. These drops take 20-30 minutes to work and you may find your vision becomes rather blurred for reading. The pupils will return to normal size within 6 - 12 hours - it is advisable not to drive during this period. The doctor will then be able to complete the examination, and reassure you that your retinas are healthy and that your floaters are not causing you any harm.

## Be aware of new Symptoms

If you experience a large shower of new floaters, a curtain of missing vision, and/or flashing lights, you should ring the Acute Referral Clinic for further advice as you may need another examination to exclude the possibility of any retinal problems having developed.

## Remember

- Always wash your hands before and after touching your eye/s.
- Always finish the course of treatment if you have been prescribed medication, even if your symptoms have improved.
- Always have regular eye checks with your Optometrist.
- Always protect your eyes with goggles or glasses when carrying out DIY or using any power equipment.
- If you splash anything into your eye always rinse with plenty of tap water and seek medical advice.
- Never use anyone else's medication (this includes eye-drops).