

**hughes
macdonald
& davidson**

OPHTHALMIC OPTICIANS

POSTERIOR VITREOUS DETACHMENT

Inflammation Red eye Watery eye Flashing lights
Antibiotic Eye drops Painkillers
Retinal detachment Viral infection Cornea Retinal tear
Vitreous gel Inflammation Blurred
Blurred vision Large floaters . vision
Eye drops Red eye Inflammation Antibiotic
Cornea Light sensitivity Watery eye Flashing lights
Retinal tear Retinal detachment Red eye Eye drops
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What is it?

[Posterior Vitreous Detachment](#) is the term used to describe the normal degeneration of the jelly (vitreous gel) filling inside of the eye. The gel sits within its own “bag” which is firmly attached to the back of the eye just behind the pupil. It is usually loosely attached to the retina (film at the back of the eye) elsewhere.

With age, the jelly breaks down and becomes watery. The water seeps out through holes in the “bag” causing the “bag” to lift away from the retina and float harmlessly above it. This process is known as [Posterior Vitreous Detachment](#).

In a minority of people, the “bag” is firmly attached to a small area of retina. Now when the bag lifts away it tugs on the retina. The retina can only respond by seeing light and in such cases people will see flashes of light.

In an even smaller minority, this tugging will cause a rip in the retina ([Retinal Tear](#)). The water from the jelly can now get under the retina and may cause it to detach from the back of the eye. This is known as [Retinal Detachment](#).

If laser is applied to a retinal tear early enough it may stop it progressing to a detachment. Retinal detachment is sight threatening if not operated on.

Symptoms of Posterior Vitreous Detachment include:

- Dark or Transparent spots, lines or cobweb effects

Symptoms of Retinal Tear include:

- Flashing lights, very large floaters

Symptoms of Retinal Detachment include:

- A dark shadow coming in from the edge of your vision, which you cannot see around or through. If more of your retina detaches then the shadow will keep moving towards the centre.

Should you develop new flashing lights or loss of vision at any point after being examined by your Optometrist, you should contact the Practice where you were examined.

You should tell the person answering the phone that you are worried that you have a retinal tear or detachment and say that you need an emergency appointment.

If you are unable to this, contact your GP or call NHS24 on 111.

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Inverurie

3 Garioch Centre

01467 625177

Banchory

75 High Street

01330 822903

Turriff

6 Main Street

01888 562592

Peterhead

2 Drummers Corner

01779 471825

www.hmdopticians.co.uk

