

Flashes and floaters in your vision

Information for patients



Why do flashes and floaters happen?

Flashes of light or floaters are commonly seen by people with normal healthy eyes. Floaters can look like tadpoles, or a spider's web, and drift around as you move your eye. These visual effects occur because of changes to the gel inside the eye - known as the vitreous. Flashes and floaters can happen when the vitreous has separated from the retina inside the eye. This is known as a posterior vitreous detachment.

Are flashes and floaters dangerous?

It is common for the vitreous to change and cause flashes and floaters but usually this does not cause serious problems with your eye. Flashes usually get better over days and floaters usually stay the same or get better over months. It is important to have your eye checked if new flashes and floaters occur. However, when you were examined today there was no sign of damage to your eye and so no treatment is needed.

When to seek help

It is uncommon, but possible, for damage to occur inside your eye later on. You should visit your **optician straight away** if:

- The flashes or floaters become **worse**
- You see a **solid curtain** over the edge of your vision
- You suddenly **lose vision**.

If your optician is closed, you should phone:

NHS24 on 111

