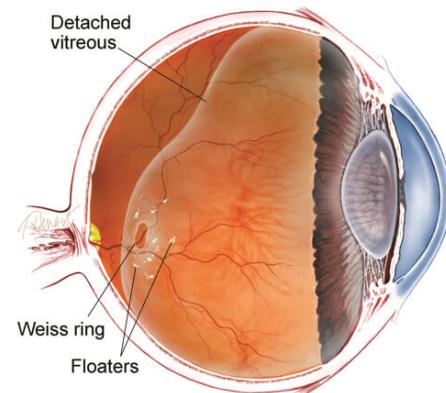




## Posterior Vitreous Detachment (PVD):

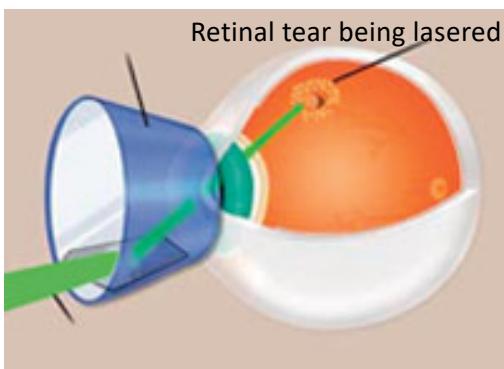
### **What is a Posterior Vitreous Detachment?**

The eye is full of a clear jelly called the vitreous. With aging, this vitreous becomes less of a compact gel, instead becoming increasingly liquid. When enough of the vitreous changes to a liquid form, the remaining gel can separate from the back of the retina. Though the gel is relatively clear, it can be visible as a (or several) large new floaters in the eye. Sometimes the vitreous tugs on the retina as it separates and this can create spontaneous flashes of lights. Floaters and flashing lights are the two main symptoms of a vitreous separation.



### **What are the symptoms?**

Flashing lights and floaters are the main symptoms of a posterior vitreous detachment. The flashing lights typically improve in several weeks. The floaters can last a long time (months to years) though typically they become less noticeable or drift out of the vision with time. In extreme cases, the floaters can be surgically removed by a vitreo-retinal surgeon.



### **Why does a PVD matter?**

The flashing lights and floaters of a PVD can be a warning sign of a tear in the retina. If the vitreous jelly is tightly adherent to the retina it can create a retinal tear as it tries to separate. This tear can progress to pull the entire retina off in a retinal detachment. Retinal detachments require surgical intervention and have the risk of leading to permanent vision loss.

### **What can be done to a retinal tear?**

Urgent dilated examination is important in patients who have flashes/floater because if a tear is present, it can be treated with laser and greatly reduce the risk that it becomes a detachment.

### **Follow-Up:**

Follow-up will depend on the initial examination. However, in all cases if you have worsening floaters, flashing lights, a blurring of part of the peripheral vision (like a shade rising/falling) or another significant change in vision you should call immediately for a repeat eye examination with dilation.

**All patients with new/worsening floaters, flashing lights, blackout of part of peripheral vision (like a curtain rising/falling) or changes in vision should call immediately and we can arrange an urgent dilated eye examination.**