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Posterior Vitreous Detachments/Retinal Detachment Symptoms

As people age the vitreous or jelly part of the eye tends to liquify. This is a normal aging process. As the vitreous liquifies, it also tends to shrink which is also normal. Shrinkage can then cause some traction or pulling of the vitreous or jelly on the retina. When this happens, most of the time the vitreous will separate from the retina cleanly. However, if it pulls a tiny bit of the retina with it, it can cause a hole or tear in the retina. A hole or tear in the retina in almost all cases needs to be fixed soon because the fluid vitreous can go through the hole or tear and get behind the retina and cause a retinal detachment. If there are symptoms associated with a vitreous separation, we need to see you. If you have dozens of floaters, which would be black dots like ants, gnats or bees flying around in your eye, or if you have one or two new large floaters, flashes of light, cobwebs, or a curtain, you need to be seen. If we determine that you only have a vitreous separation without a hole or tear in the retina, then no treatment is necessary. However, if we find a hole or tear in your retina with these symptoms, then either laser surgery, or cryo (freezing) surgery will usually take care of it. If it goes on to a retinal detachment, then you may have a curtain over your vision and would require major retinal detachment surgery.

Remember, if you get dozens of floaters, one or two new large floaters, a cobweb, flashes of light, or a curtain, please call us.