

FLOATERS & FLASHES

WHAT ARE FLOATERS AND FLASHES?

Floaters look like small specks, dots, circles, lines or cobwebs in your field of vision. While they seem to be in front of your eye, they are floating inside. Floaters are tiny clumps of gel or cells inside the vitreous that fills your eye. What you see are the shadows these clumps cast on your retina.

Flashes can look like flashing lights or lightning streaks in your field of vision. Some people compare them to seeing "stars" after being hit on the head. You might see flashes on and off for weeks, or even months. They can occur when the vitreous rubs or pulls on your retina. Flashes are more commonly seen when looking at a low-lit background or in total darkness.

WHAT CAUSES FLOATERS AND FLASHES?

Most of the inside of the eye is filled with a jelly-like substance called vitreous. Particles floating in this vitreous gel come from one of three sources. First, debris can become trapped in the vitreous during the development of the eye. Second, small opaque particles can develop from deterioration of the vitreous or surrounding tissue. This is more common in nearsighted eyes and occurs naturally with age. Third, floaters may result from disease or

injury to the vitreous or surrounding tissue. The most common causes of floaters are vitreous degeneration and aging. Flashes in the vitreous typically occur during vitreous collapse. The vitreous begins to pull away from the retina, causing light flashes.

If a significant problem is noted concerning the vitreous or retina, one of our retinal specialist can be consulted.

ARE FLOATERS OR FLASHES INDICATIONS OF POSSIBLE LOSS OF VISION?

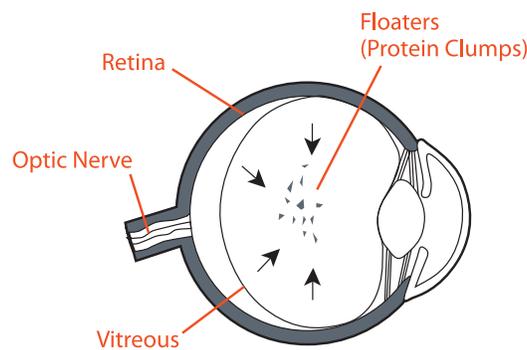
A thorough evaluation of the eye is essential when floaters or flashes first appear or if any change is noted in their appearance, such as a sudden increase in the number of floaters or if accompanied by flashes of light. The appearance of floaters or flashes does not necessarily indicate potential loss of vision; however, in some cases, they are an indication of serious vitreous or retinal disease. Treatment may be necessary to prevent

permanent vision loss due to a retinal tear or detachment.

SEE THE DIFFERENCE.

The doctors at MidWest Eye Center are experienced in the medical and/or surgical treatment for cataract, glaucoma, laser, refractive and cosmetic surgeries.

VITREOUS COLLAPSE



HOW ARE FLOATERS AND FLASHES TREATED?

We recommend a thorough eye examination to allow the doctor to view the vitreous and retina. This examination can often reveal the source of the floaters or light flashes. Once the overall health of the vitreous and retina has been established, it's possible that no treatment is necessary. Sometimes the inside of the eye should be re-evaluated periodically to confirm that the vitreous and retina show no additional signs of change.



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