

FLASHES & FLOATERS

Most of the back of the eye is filled with a clear jelly called the **Vitreous**.

The Vitreous is attached at a number of places to the innermost light sensitive layer of the eye known as the **Retina**.

As we get older the Vitreous tends to shrink and starts to pull on the Retina. This sensation of pulling is interpreted by the brain as **flashes of light**.

As it pulls away from the retina, bits of the Vitreous start to float around inside the eye and these are known as **floaters**. As light enters the eye it hits these floaters and casts a shadow on the Retina so the floaters appear grey or black. Often people describe these floaters as looking like a hair or a spider in their vision.

The pulling away of the Vitreous from the Retina is known as **Posterior Vitreous Detachment** or **PVD**.

Normally this is harmless and causes no damage to the eyesight. The flashes usually stop within a week to a month, then most of the floaters gradually go away but often a few remain.

Occasionally as the jelly shrinks away it pulls a small hole or tear in the Retina. If this hole or tear is not treated it may lead to a **Retinal Detachment** (separation of layers of the retina) and loss of vision. That is why if you have symptoms of **“Flashes and Floaters”** the doctor will need to examine the Retina very carefully to make sure there is no hole or tear.