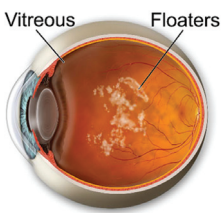


# Floaters & Flashes of Light

**Seeing spots or cobwebs?  
Do you see sparkles of light in your vision?**

Floaters are small specks drifting in and out of the vision. They can be in a variety of shapes and sizes, with some being described as web-like or spots in the vision. Most times, floaters are annoying, but harmless, and are due to natural changes inside the eye.

In the back of the eye, there is a jelly-like substance called the vitreous. It is thicker when we are younger, with a consistency like jello. As we get older, it becomes more liquid-like and moves around a bit more. Sometimes, small

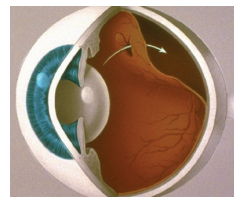


clumps of the vitreous form, and when light comes into the eye, the

floaters create shadows on the retina. The retina is the light-sensing tissue in the back of the eye. Usually, the

floaters will not go away on their own, but the brain becomes accustomed to them with time and ignores them. Floaters are most noticeable when looking at a white background or in brighter illumination.

Whenever a new onset of floaters starts, it is recommended that you call to schedule to see an eye physician *as soon as possible*. Occasionally, the floaters may be an indication of something far more serious and sight-threatening. When a retinal tear or detachment occurs due to



various reasons, floaters may be an early

indicator of this serious condition, and treatment

*Please see reverse side...*



*The site for your sight.*

needs to be started as soon as possible. It is NOT something to wait to see if it will go away on its own.

Flashes of light may also be another indicator of something wrong. Generally, the retina does not sense pain. However, it does sense light. If something is pulling or tugging on the retina, flashes of light may occur. You can mimic this slightly by closing your eyes in a dark room and gently pushing on your eye.

Usually, around our sixties, the vitreous will pull away from its attachment to the retina in the back. When it occurs, many will note a new floater or flashing of light, which may last from several weeks to months. This is a normal aging change, but sometimes as it occurs, it can rip or tear the retina. If you have noted this change,

I recommend a dilated eye examination to rule out any complications. If any complication is noted, I will refer you to a retinal specialist and schedule the appointment for you.

Removing floaters with surgery is a VERY risky procedure, so unless the floater is really compromising your vision, most surgeons will not perform the surgery. As annoying as floaters can be, most times they are a natural change in the eye that we adjust to with time. If you have any concerns or worries, please feel free to discuss these issues with me.

**Thank you for choosing  
Full Spectrum Family Vision  
Care for your eye care needs!**

*Heather L.*  
TRAPHEAGEN, O.D.