



BROADWAY

- O P T I C I A N S -

Floaters & Flashing Lights - A Brief Guide

What are floaters?

Often, people who have healthy eyes see floaters. They appear as spots, lines or cobweb effects, usually when you look at a plain surface such as a white wall or a clear blue sky. They often appear when the clear jelly in the main part of your eye gets older.

What are flashes?

Sometimes the jelly in the main part of your eye shrinks a little and tugs on the retina (the light-sensitive layer) at the back of your eye. This can cause flashes of light at the edge of your vision. These differ from the disturbance of vision that can occur with migraine.

When should I be concerned?

If you suddenly notice a shower of new floaters, or floaters along with flashes or a dark shadow or "curtain" in your vision, then you should seek advice urgently. These symptoms can mean that the retina is tearing. Go to an Accident and Emergency Department if necessary.

What will happen if the retina tears?

The retina is at the back of your eye. It receives the images and sends them to the brain. This is one of the things that enable you to see. If the retina tears, it may come away from the back wall of the eye. This is called retinal detachment. It can result in partial or complete loss of vision.

How is retinal detachment treated?

A tear may be treated by using a laser. If treated quickly, you may have a better chance of full recovery. However, if your retina has become detached, you will need surgery. The operation may restore most of your vision but may come too late for a full recovery.

Look out for:

- ⊙ Flashes or floaters getting worse
- ⊙ A black shadow in your vision
- ⊙ A sudden cloud of spots
- ⊙ A curtain or veil over your vision
- ⊙ Any sudden loss of vision

Call us on **01702 477758** or go to an Accident and Emergency Department without delay if you notice any of these symptoms.



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The drops I have used on your eyes are called tropicamide

- ⊙ Tropicamide is used to make the aperture of your eye - your pupil - larger. This enables me to have a much more thorough look at the inside and back of your eye to check for potential problems.
- ⊙ The drops take about 15 to 30 minutes to work and last for up to four hours.
- ⊙ The large pupils will make you more sensitive to light and distant and near objects may appear blurred, especially if it is sunny.
- ⊙ It is recommended that driving should be avoided for at least six hours after the drops have been put in.
- ⊙ In the unlikely event that you experience any unusual symptoms, such as a painful red eye, you should contact us as soon as possible on **01702 477758**. Alternatively, if it is out of practice hours, you should seek medical advice as you may be experiencing an adverse reaction to the drops.