

# Flashes and Floaters

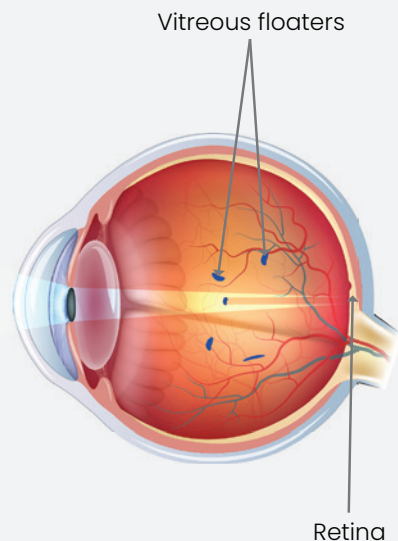
Your guide to causes, symptoms and treatments of flashes and floaters.



## What are flashes and floaters?

Eye flashes are visual phenomena that are typically described as a momentary arc of white light, similar to a bolt of lightning or a camera flash.

Eye floaters may look like specks, cobwebs or strings which drift across your vision as you move your eye.



## What causes flashes and floaters?

Most eye floaters are age-related that occur in the vitreous which fills the eye.

When we are born, the vitreous is more gel like and is attached strongly to the retina at several points. With normal eye ageing as we get older, the vitreous becomes liquid and this can cause floaters.

With further ageing, the vitreous eventually separates from the retina usually in middle age – termed a posterior vitreous detachment. When this occurs patients can experience a sudden increase in floaters and also flashes in their vision.

As posterior vitreous detachment can be associated with retinal tears and retinal detachment, it is very important to have an urgent retinal examination with an optometrist or ophthalmologist within 24-48 hours to exclude these.

Other less common causes of floaters include eye inflammation and vitreous bleeding – again emphasising the importance of early retinal examination.

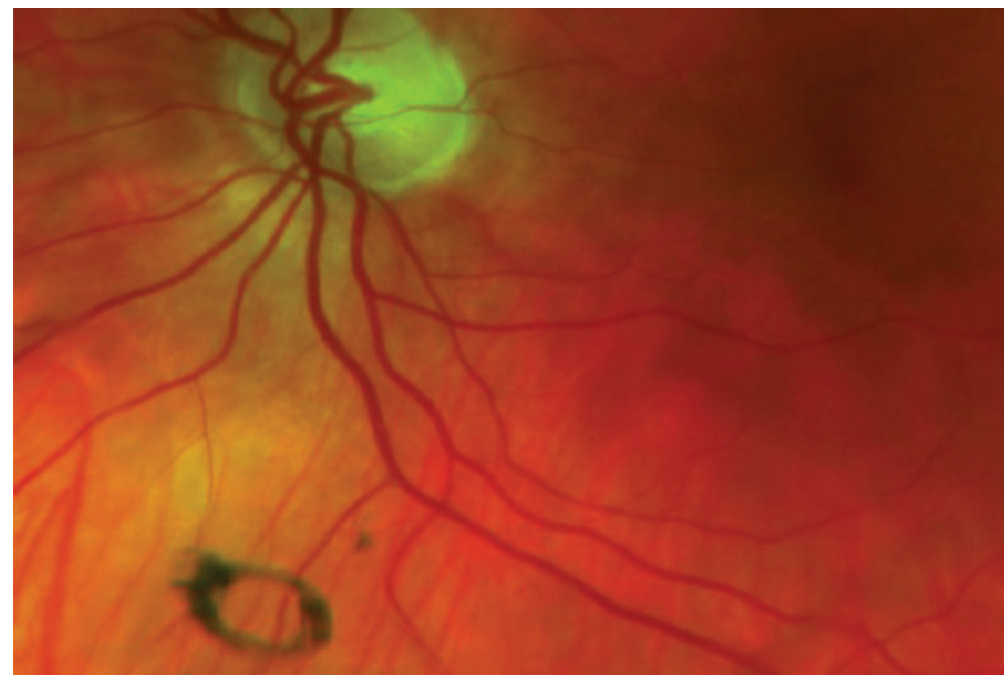
## How we treat flashes and floaters?

In most people, age related floaters come and go and don't need treatment. They will usually become less noticeable with time as they continue to break down and as the brain adapts to them.

In rare cases when many of these floaters interfere with vision and interfere with our daily activities – a procedure called a Vitrectomy can be performed to remove the vitreous gel and the floaters.

However, these symptoms can also indicate an acute retinal tear or retinal detachment which usually require urgent treatment with retinal laser or retinal surgery.

At The Eye Health Centre, our eye specialists can assess your flashes and floaters and provide urgent treatment if needed.



*A large vitreous floater in front of the retina*



## Dr Gurmit Uppal

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Dr Uppal is an ophthalmic vitreo-retinal specialist with a research background in macular surgery. He undertook his training in London at leading teaching hospitals and his ophthalmic training at the world-renowned Moorfields Eye Hospital, the largest eye centre in Europe. Thereafter he completed a retinal fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery and medical retina at Sydney Eye Hospital. Dr Uppal followed this up with a second vitreo-retinal fellowship at Moorfields Eye Hospital, London.



## Dr Michael Hogden

*BSc MBBS (Hons) FRANZCO DAO*

Dr Michael Hogden is a retinal specialist with subspecialty training in the medical and surgical management of disorders of the vitreous, retina and macula.

## Do you have a question or concern about your eye health?

To discuss your condition with an experienced ophthalmologist or optometrist, please contact The Eye Health Centre.



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