

## RETINAL TEARS AND DETACHMENTS-*protect your vision know the signs and symptoms*



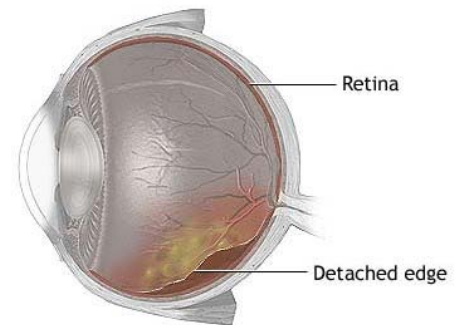
Dr. Jeff Bourgerie

### Retinal tears or detachments- what are they?

*Retinal tears or detachments are to be taken seriously. The information here will share the most common symptoms or signs, but as with any visual concern, please consult your eye doctor if you have any questions.*

The most common type of retinal detachment usually occurs when the vitreous separates from the back wall of the eye. The vitreous is the clear gel that fills the central cavity of the eye. The formed vitreous gel liquefies with age and eventually falls away or separates from the retina. This is called a posterior vitreous detachment (PVD) and is a normal event occurring in most people sometime between 40-70 years of age.

As the gel separates and falls away from the center of the retina, one will often **see floaters**. These appear as dots, spots, or curly lines that appear suspended in front of you and move with your eye. People often think these floaters are flying bugs. **Flashes of light** are also a common symptom of a PVD. These are due to pulling on the retina as the gel separates. This pulling stimulates the retina, resulting in a flash of light. If a retinal blood vessel is broken from the pulling, a vitreous hemorrhage can occur. A small amount of blood may be seen by the patient as a **shower of spots**. Larger hemorrhages can cause **large dark blobs** in the visual field or an overall decrease in vision. If the gel is abnormally adherent to the retina or the retina is weak in a certain area, a retinal tear can occur as the gel separates and pulls away from the retina.



***It just happened!*** *While playing in a basketball league I noticed that I would reach for the ball and miss it, or a pass would be thrown to me and I couldn't catch it because I couldn't see the ball. It seemed like there was a blind spot in my left eye. I brushed off the symptoms and continued on with life. Later that spring I found myself looking through the top portion of my left eye as the blind spot had become more pronounced. One day while at work I noticed the blind spot seemed to be more prevalent and at the urging of my wife, I went to see my optometrist. It was confirmed, I had a detached retina, and I realized this was no small concern. Both my optometrist and the consulting surgeon made me realize how serious the condition was. The next day I was in surgery to have my retina repaired. I was told that, had I caught it earlier the damage would not have been so extensive. But I am happy to say the surgery was successful and I still have my sight. Clayton Kattre Abbottsford.*

### Remember know the warning signs and symptoms

- A blind spot in your vision • Blurred Vision • Shadowy lines • Flashes of light • Floaters (spots)
- and if you experience any of them, seek immediate eye care**

Be ProActive-If you are very nearsighted, have regular, dilated eye exams. If you have a family history of retinal problems, have regular, dilated eye exams. Have your eye doctor examine your eye after any serious eye injury.

Dr. Jeff Bourgerie is an optometrist at HealthView Eye Care Center-Medford. For more information on 'retinal tears and detachments', you can contact him at (715)748-2020 or 866-748-2020.