

Patient Information

Flashes and floaters

Introduction

The 'floaters' / 'cobwebs' you sometimes see are dark shadows of floating pieces of the vitreous gel (jelly in the eye), which normally fills the back of the eye. The vitreous is attached to the sensitive layer of the eye called the retina. As the vitreous becomes loose (posterior vitreous detachment) it pulls on the sensitive retina, sometimes causing a sensation of 'flashes of light'. The floaters will gradually get less noticeable. These usually do not cause any problems and no treatment is required. The flashes should also settle in time.

Warning signs

- Larger, opaque floaters that you cannot see through.
- Sudden shower of floaters.
- Persisting flashes of light.
- A dark curtain or shadow appearing anywhere in your vision.
- Loss or distortion of your vision.

These could indicate a serious eye problem, such as, a retinal hole, retinal tear, retinal detachment or a vitreous haemorrhage (bleed in the gel of the eye) and can cause severe loss of vision.

What if I have any problems or questions after reading this leaflet?

Please contact the **Urgent Referral Clinic** team at Russells Hall Hospital Eye Clinic on **01384 456111 ext. 3633** (9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday).

Eye emergency, out of hours

In case of an eye emergency after the closing hours of the Eye Clinic at Russells Hall Hospital (including weekends and bank holidays), please contact:

Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre on 0121 507 4440

The doctor on call is usually based at the Eye Centre, City Hospital, Dudley Road, Birmingham. They may need to call you back, and if necessary, they will arrange for you to visit them.

Note: the information in this booklet is provided for information only. The information found is **not** a substitute for professional medical advice or care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. **Always** check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. This is only indicative and general information for the procedure. Individual experiences may vary and all the points may not apply to all patients at all times. Please discuss your individual circumstances with your eye doctor.

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<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/ophthalmology/>

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