

Retinal Detachment

This material will help you understand what a detached retina is and what the treatment options are for this condition.

What is a retinal detachment?

If you compare the eye to an old-fashioned camera, the retina is the thin layer of “film” that lines the back of the eye. The retina captures images that pass through the front of the eye and then sends them to the brain. When the retina lifts or pulls away from its position, it does not work. If this happens, parts of your vision may become blurry. A detached retina is a very serious condition that can lead to permanent vision loss.

What causes the retina to detach?

The back of the eye is filled with a clear gel called the **vitreous** (vit-ree-us). As you get older, the vitreous gel turns to a liquid and starts to shrink. This causes it to pull away from the retina. Sometimes, the vitreous will pull hard enough to tear the retina in one or more places, creating a retinal tear(s). Fluid may then pass through this tear and lift the retina from its position on the back wall. This is known as a retinal detachment.

How are retinal detachments treated?

If your retina is detached, you will need surgery to put the retina back in its proper position. There are several surgery options, which include scleral buckle, pneumatic retinopexy, and vitrectomy. The type of surgery will depend on the nature of your detachment. These treatments are also done in combination with a laser or a freeze treatment (called “cryopexy”) to seal the retina in place around tears. In addition, gas or silicone oil is used to hold the

retina in place until it heals. You and your eye doctor will discuss the surgery option that is best for you.

For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.



<http://www.kellogg.umich.edu/patientcare/conditions/detached.retina.html>



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/detached-torn-retina/treatment.cfm>

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