

Macular Hole

This material will help you understand how a macular hole forms and how it may be treated.

What is a macular hole?

A macular hole is a small tear in the part of the retina called the macula. If you think of the eye like a camera, the retina acts like the “film”. It captures images and sends them to the brain. The macula is the part of the retina that is responsible for your central and most precise vision. It allows you to read small print and thread needles. A hole in the macula will cause loss of central vision.

How does a macular hole form?

The back of the eye is filled with a clear gel called the **vitreous** (vit-ree-us). As you get older, the vitreous begins to thicken and shrink. This causes it to pull away from the macula. Sometimes, the vitreous will stick to the macula and cause the tissue to stretch. Over time, the stretching may cause the macula to tear, forming a hole.

What is the treatment for a macular hole?

Repairing a hole in the macula requires a surgical procedure called a vitrectomy. This procedure removes the vitreous so it no longer sticks and pulls on the macula. The vitreous is replaced by a salt water fluid, similar to the natural fluids of the eye. The eye is also filled with gas to help the macular hole close. Your doctor will recommend that you position your head a certain way for several days to help with healing. While the gas is in the eye, you cannot fly on a plane, scuba dive, or receive nitrous oxide (laughing gas), as this

may cause a dangerous change in eye pressure. The gas bubble can last up to 2 months depending on the amount used. Your eyesight should slowly return as the macula hole closes and the bubble goes away.

For more information, scan this code with your smartphone or visit the website listed.



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/macular-hole.cfm>

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