

Vitreous Hemorrhage

This material will help you understand what a vitreous hemorrhage is, its causes, and how it is treated.

What is a vitreous hemorrhage?

A vitreous hemorrhage occurs when blood gets into the vitreous. The **vitreous** is a gel-like structure that fills the back of the eye. The blood blocks light rays from reaching the retina in back of the eye. If the eye is like a camera, the **retina** is the thin layer of “film” that lines the back of the eye. It captures images that pass through the front of the eye and then sends them to the brain. When light cannot reach the retina, your vision may be poor.

Signs of vitreous hemorrhage include blurred vision or seeing dark spots or floaters. Often, you may see a streak of dye rise or fall slowly, and then spread to fill the eye. If the hemorrhage is very dense, your vision may be blocked completely. In this case, you will only be able to see light and dark.

What can cause a vitreous hemorrhage?

When the tiny blood vessels in the eye break, they can leak blood into the vitreous. This causes a vitreous hemorrhage. The vessels can break for several reasons:

- Growth of abnormal blood vessels (neovascularization). This is usually the result of other eye conditions, such as **diabetic retinopathy**. These new vessels are weak and break easily.
- A **torn or detached retina** can be associated with broken blood vessels in the eye.
- Injury or trauma to the eye.

How is a vitreous hemorrhage treated?

Normally, no treatment is needed for a vitreous hemorrhage. The blood should clear by itself and your vision will be restored. Unfortunately, this may take up to several months. Your eye doctor will follow up with you and monitor this condition until it goes away.

If your case is more severe or does not clear as expected, your eye doctor may perform a vitrectomy surgery. This removes the vitreous and replaces it with a saltwater solution similar to your eye's natural fluids.

You and your doctor will discuss the course of action that is best for you.

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



<http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1230216-overview>



<http://www.aao.org/publications/eyenet/200703/pearls.cfm>

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