



Wasatch View Eye Care	www.wasatchview.com
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Floaters

Overview

Floaters are typically strands of collagen fibers that exist in the vitreous or gel portion of the eye that we see as they move across the visual axis. It's similar to seeing dust particles floating in a dark movie theater. They look like pieces of a "wrinkled string" or "cobweb" that seem to float in front of a person's eyes. In most cases, they are harmless and only bothersome. When there is a sudden increase in floaters, flashes of light or a loss of vision, an immediate visit to an eye doctor is required to check for a retinal detachment. Usually there is no treatment performed for floaters because of the risks with surgery. However, very bothersome episodes of floaters can be removed with a surgery called a vitrectomy or with a laser in vitreolysis.

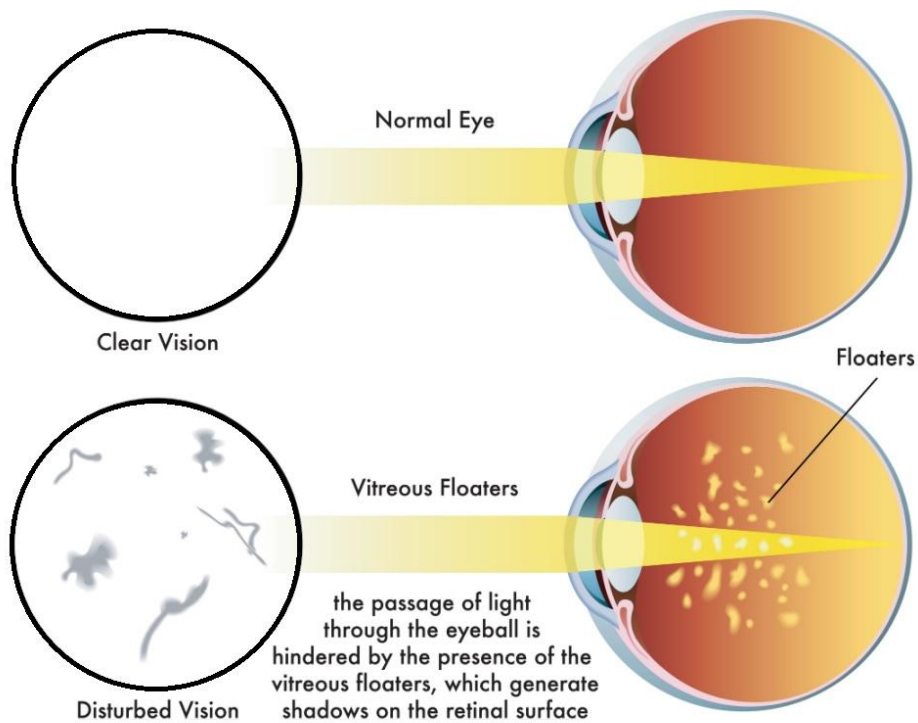


Signs and Symptoms

Visual symptoms are seeing the floaters move across their vision. They are described as cobwebs, wrinkled strings or as spots. Sometimes your eye doctor can see them during a dilated eye exam.

Causes

The cause of floaters is typically related to aging of the vitreous. As we age strands of collagen fibers begin to collect together and form elongated strings in the vitreous. Then when they move around and cross our visual axis we see them.



Testing & Evaluation

To evaluate your floaters your eye doctor will dilate your eyes and use a biomicroscope to look at the front portion of the vitreous. To look at the back portion a high powered lens will be needed. Sometimes the floaters are difficult to see.

Management

In most cases there is no treatment done for floaters because of the risks with surgery unless they are severe and obstruct vision. In that case a vitrectomy would be performed. A vitrectomy is where the vitreous is removed and then replaced with saline. Another option is to perform a vitreolysis where a laser is used to remove or “zap” the floaters. If there is a new onset of floaters and they occur with flashes of light or a loss of vision, an immediate visit to an eye doctor is warranted to check for a retinal detachment.

Websites

All About Vision: <http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/spotsfloats.htm>

American Optometric Association:
<https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-and-vision-conditions/floater-and-spots?sso=y>

National Eye Institute:
<https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/floater>