

Eye Health: Floaters in Your Vision and When You Should Be Concerned

While anyone can develop floaters (little spots or shapes that “float” in your vision), they can be a symptom of diabetes-related retinopathy or diabetes-related macular edema. If you have changes to your vision, including seeing floaters, contact your eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist) right away. You may need a dilated and comprehensive eye exam or retinal photography to see if you have diabetes-related eye disease. If you do, you'll be able to take steps to protect your vision.

What are floaters?

Floaters can take on the form of many different shapes, including specks, circles, lines, or cobwebs that appear in your vision.

What you're seeing is a shadow being cast on your retina. This could be from leaked blood from damaged blood vessels or signs of other problems in your eye.

You may notice that the floaters you see move with your vision and they can make it hard to read.

What causes floaters?

Floaters are common if you:

- Have retinopathy
- Have macular edema or other swelling in your eye
- Have had cataract surgery
- Are nearsighted

What's next if the floaters are from an eye complication?

Talk with your eye doctor about what treatments are right for you. It's also important to work with your health care team to see if your diabetes treatment plan needs to change, including whether your A1C target needs to be adjusted, and steps to take to treat the eye complication causing it.

Are floaters permanent or temporary?

Some floaters may come and go, but if your floaters are related to ongoing issues in your eyes, like retinopathy or glaucoma, you may keep seeing them for much longer and they can be present for months or years. Most floaters become less visible as time goes on.

When you should be concerned about floaters.

You should always report changes to your vision like floaters to your eye doctor right away, even if you've already been diagnosed with an eye complication and have had floaters before. Suddenly seeing new floaters could be a sign of a new issue or the existing issue could be getting worse.

You should also contact your eye doctor right away if you're seeing flashes of light. Flashes of light could be a sign of a retinal tear or a detached retina, which can lead to vision loss and need to be treated right away.



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