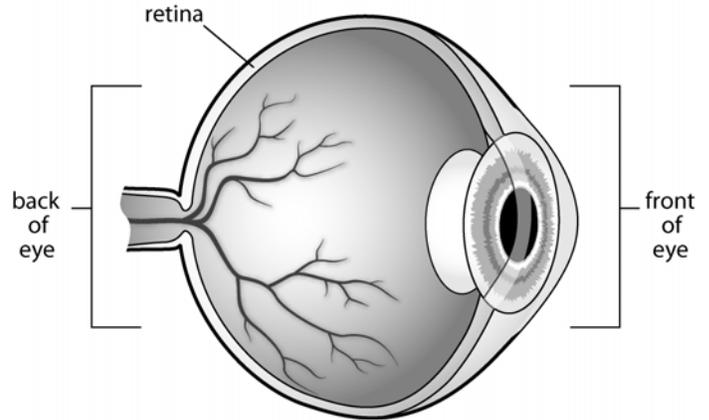


# Retinal Tears and Detachment

The retina is the lining in the back of the inside of the eye. It sends messages to the brain so you can see.

When the retina pulls away from the inside of the eye, tears, holes or detachment can occur.



## Signs of Retinal Tears and Detachment

Retinal tears or detachment are painless. Signs include:

- Sudden increase in floating spots in your vision
- Sudden flashes of light in one or both eyes
- A shadow or curtain over part of your vision
- Sudden blurry or decreased vision

## Your Care

If you have any signs, see a doctor called an ophthalmologist right away. **Retinal detachment is a medical emergency.** If not reattached quickly, permanent vision loss can occur in the affected eye. Prompt medical care and treatment can save your vision.

Your doctor will check your eye to find what is causing your signs. If a retinal tear, hole or detachment is found, surgery is done. If a tear or hole is treated before detachment occurs, you will likely retain most of your vision.

## **Treatment for small holes or tears**

Small holes or tears are treated with a laser beam or a freeze treatment called **cryopexy**. These treatments are done in your doctor's office.

- A **laser beam** may be used to make burns around the retinal tear or hole. These burns cause scarring to secure the retina in place.
- In **cryopexy**, intense cold is used to freeze the retina around the tear. This freezes the area and causes a scar to develop. The scarring secures the retina to the eye wall.

## **Treatment for retinal detachment**

There are three types of surgeries used to treat retinal detachment. You may need to have this done in a hospital.

- **Scleral buckling** – a tiny band is attached to the outside of the back of the eye to gently push the wall of the eye against the detached retina.
- **Vitrectomy** – a tiny incision is made in the eye. Gas is injected to push the retina against the wall of the eye.
- **Pneumatic retinopexy** – Gas is injected to cause a bubble. The gas bubble pushes the retina back into place, so it can reattach itself to the wall of the eye. You may need to maintain a certain head position for several days. The gas bubble disappears over time.

With all of these surgeries, either laser beam or cryopexy is used to secure the retina back in place. It may take several months following surgery to know how well your vision will improve. Results are best when treatment occurs before retinal detachment.

## **Talk to your doctor about your questions and concerns.**

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