

RETINAL HOLES, TEARS & RETINAL DETACHMENT

You have been diagnosed with a retinal hole, tear or a retinal detachment. The retina is the inner lining of the eye, which provides vision. This tissue forms a solid barrier between the gel-like liquid of the center of the eye and the outer layers. The retina lines the back two-thirds of the eyes' inner surface. Think of an eggshell, which has had the yolk, and white removed through a small hole. If you look through that hole you would see the inner lining of the egg. The retina lines the eye in the same way.

A retinal hole or tear creates an opening in the "lining" of the eye. Fluid from the inner gel can use this hole to seep behind the lining or retina.

Holes and tears have many causes, including injuries, but can develop for no apparent reason.

Retinal holes and tears need to be repaired. This can be done by either laser or cryotherapy (freezing). Both methods create a new seal around the opening in the retina by "welding" or scarring the area around the hole or tear to the outer layers of the eye. These are very successful treatments, which are performed in the doctor's office.

A retinal detachment usually occurs when a hole or tear develops, fluid seeps behind the retina and separates the retina from the outer layers of the eye often over a large area of the eye. A retinal detachment is a very serious condition, which can result in permanent loss of vision. Most retinal detachments must be surgically repaired in the specially equipped hospital. Much of the success or failure of this surgery depends on how soon after the retinal detachment the surgery is performed. The sooner, the better.

Symptoms, that is, what you see, for retinal holes or tears, usually involves flashes or streaks of light and/or a large number of "floaters", i.e., and many little dark spots.

Retinal detachment symptoms include flashes or streaks of light, an appearance of spider or cobwebs, a "grey veil" or many floaters. Usually these symptoms occur in a certain part of your vision, i.e., to the right, to the left, up above, down below, etc.

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should call your referring eye doctor or Eye Center of Texas at 713-797-1010 immediately.