Retinal Detachment

PATIENT EDUCATION

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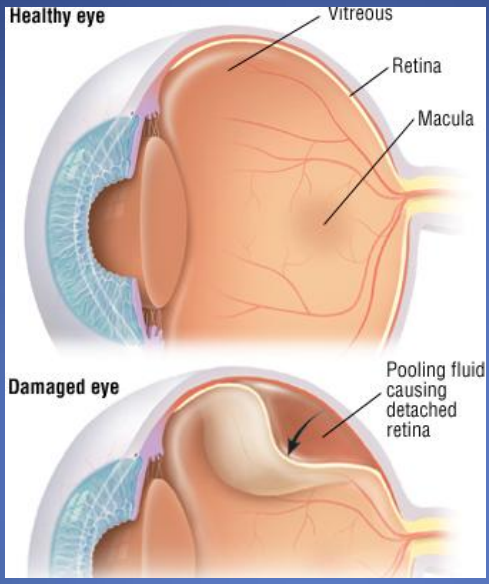
What is Retinal Detachment (RD)?

Retina is the light-sensitive layer at the back of the eye that converts light images into nerve impulses that are relayed to the brain to produce sight. When the retina separates from the deeper layers of the eyeball the retina is said to be detached.



AM I AT RISK FOR RD?

There are various factors that can put you at risk for RD:

- Trauma
- Myopia
- Cataract surgery
- Congenital malformation
- Vitreous disease or degeneration
- Other eye has developed RD

If you see flashes of light, floaters or a missing portion in your vision, contact your eye doctor immediately!

What will the doctor do?

Visual acuity test. This eye chart measures how well you see at distances.

Dilated eye exam. Putting drops in your eyes to widen and dilate pupils to see the back of the eye. Vision may remain blurry for the 4-5 hours on that day. The dilatation takes 30-45 minutes.

During this retinal examination, the doctor will check for retinal tears and areas of detachment by using a special hand-held ophthalmoscope (a lighted instrument for looking inside the eye) or a slit lamp.

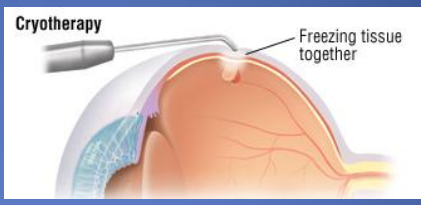
In cases in which the doctor cannot see a retinal detachment while examining your eye, an ultrasound of the eye may be necessary.

Can we prevent RD?

Prevention: Most retinal detachments are age related, and there is no way to prevent them. If you are middle-aged or older, you may be able to identify eye problems in their early stages by scheduling an eye examination with an ophthalmologist every one to two years.

Treatment: Several techniques are available to repair retinal tears and to eliminate the area of separation behind the detached retina.

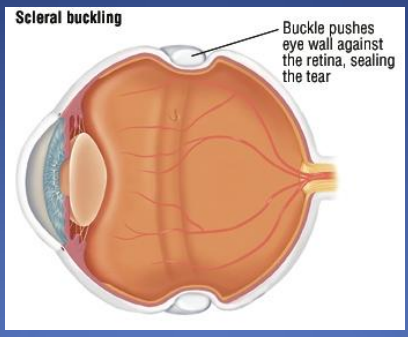
Cryotherapy — The retinal tear is sealed with a freezing probe.



Laser photocoagulation — A laser beam is focused on the retinal tear to seal it.

Pnematic retinopexy – A bubble of special gas is injected near the area of retinal detachment to press the retina back into place. A special position like face down position may be required to be maintained after the gas injection

Scleral buckling — A silicon band is placed on the outside of the eyeball. A tiny hole is made in the sclera (the tough layer beneath the retina, also known as the white of the eye). Through this tiny hole, any vitreous fluid that has leaked behind the retina is drained, allowing the detached retina to fall back into its normal position.



Vitrectomy Surgery - A vitrectomy is a common retinal surgery. During the surgery, vitreous gel is removed using tiny instruments. If any shrinkage is present on the layer of the retina, tiny instruments are utilized to remove it. Laser is typically applied to the break area of the retina during surgery.

The surgery lasts about 1 to 3 hours, depending on the complexity of the situation. A tamponade like gas or oil is placed inside the eye to serve as an internal "splint" until the retina heals. Over the course of several weeks, the gas bubble is absorbed. In case of oil, it has to be removed with another surgery. A special position like face down position may be required to be maintained after the gas /oil injection