

Retinal Detachment

1. What is Retina?

Retina is the light sensing delicate sheet coating the inside surface at the back of the eye. The retina converts light falling on it to electrical signals which travel along the nerve to the brain. The brain interprets these signals to “see” the world around us.

2. What is a Retinal detachment?

Separation of Retina from the inside wall of the back of the eye, like a large curtain in a room has fallen from the wall. Your retina needs to be attached to the back of the eye for its survival and to work properly.

3. Is it a blinding condition?

Yes. It is a potentially blinding condition if not treated and you will lose all or some of your vision.

4. How do I know beforehand I am going to have a retinal detachment?

These are the warning signs of a retinal detachment according to order of occurrence

Floater-Shapes like dots, rings, flies, spiders or spider legs, cobwebs passing or floating across your vision which is recent onset or worsening of a existing floater.

Flashes-Flashing lights or feeling like lightening at the edges of your vision which is recent onset or worsening of existing flashes.

Shadow in the field of your vision- A dark shadow coming towards the centre of your vision from the edges of your vision maybe a sign of detaching retina progressing to involve the centre of the back of the eye.

Blurring of your vision-

5. Do everyone with above symptoms develop retinal detachments?

No. Many people have floaters and flashes and that is normal to their eyes. But if you develop new floaters and flashes and if you notice worsening of existing floaters and flashes you have to worry about and get your eyes tested by an Ophthalmologist or a Vitreo-Retinal surgeon.

6. How my eyes will be tested if I have above symptoms?

Your pupils will be dilated with drops to have a good view of the back of your eye. When the pupils are dilated your vision is blurry and it is very difficult to see the light and you won't be able to drive or ride a motorbike for few hours preferably 4 hours. Therefore it is advisable to go with a somebody for eye examination.

7. How will the detached retina be reattached and repaired?

It is by a major operation by a Vitreo-Retinal surgeon. The steps of the surgical procedure is as follows

Gelly at the back of the eye is removed by a procedure called a Vitrectomy

Retina is reattached to the wall and breaks or tears are sealed by a welding procedure called laser or ice treatment called cryopexy to make sure that it remains attached.

Ensuring to hold the retina back to the wall until effects of laser and cryo treatment take place the back of the eye is filled with a gas or an oil.

8. What happens if I have gas or oil in the eye after retinal detachment?

Gases are dispersed slowly from the eye preferably 6-8 weeks and it depends on the type of the gas you have in the eye. And you need to be positioned according to the advises given by your doctor to achieve the success of surgical repair during the first week after the procedure.

You need positioning with oil as well and need a second operation after some time (usually after 3 months) to remove oil from the eye.

9. Can I fly with gas or oil in the eye?

You cannot fly with gas in the eye until gases are fully gone from the eye. If you fly with gas in the eye you will ruin your eye.

But you can fly with oil in the eye.

10. What is the type of anaesthesia I need?

It depends on the patient preference and length and how complicated the surgical procedure is. But it can be done easily while you are awake (Local anaesthesia) or by making you to sleep (general anaesthesia)

11. What is the success of retinal detachment repair?

If it is done early preferably within a week at least it is successful 90% of time. The main aim of operation is to preserve the vision.

12. How soon I should get the operation done?

As soon as possible