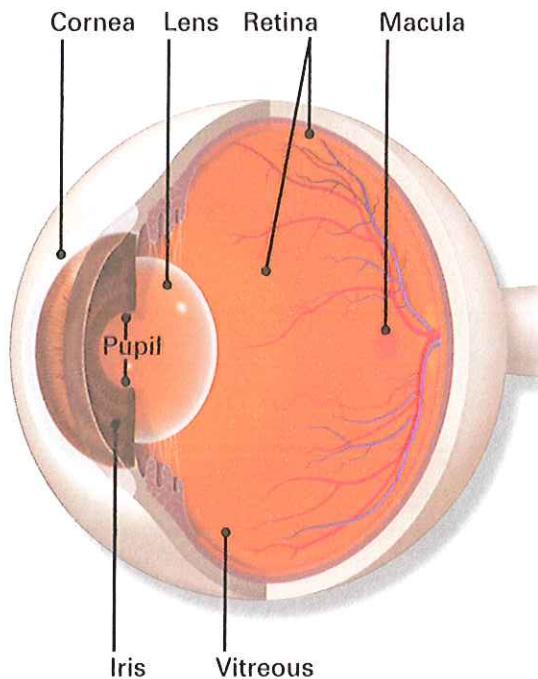
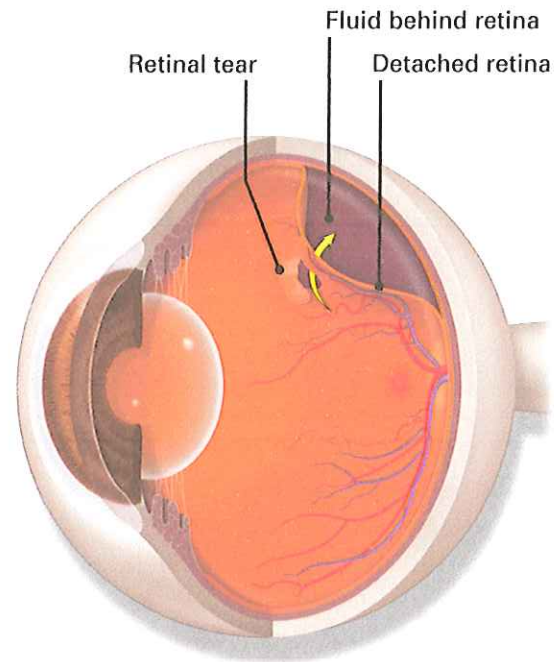


What is a detached retina?

A detached retina is when the retina lifts away from the back of the eye. The retina does not work when it is detached, making vision blurry. A detached retina is a serious problem. An ophthalmologist needs to check it out right away, or you could lose sight in that eye.



Anatomy of the eye



Eye Words to Know

Retina: Layer of nerve cells lining the back wall inside the eye. This layer senses light and sends signals to the brain so you can see.

Vitreous: Jelly-like substance that fills the middle of the eye.

Floater: Tiny clumps of cells or other material inside the vitreous. These look like small specks, strings or clouds moving in your field of vision.

How do you get a detached retina?

As we get older, the vitreous in our eyes starts to shrink and get thinner. As the eye moves, the vitreous moves around on the retina without causing problems. But sometimes the vitreous may stick to the retina and pull hard enough to tear it. When that happens, fluid can pass through the tear and lift (detach) the retina.

Who is at risk for a detached retina?

You are more likely to have a detached retina if you:

- need glasses to see far away (are nearsighted)
- have had cataract, glaucoma, or other eye surgery
- take glaucoma medications that make the pupil small (like pilocarpine)
- had a serious eye injury
- had a retinal tear or detachment in your other eye
- have family members who had retinal detachment
- have weak areas in your retina (seen by an eye doctor during an exam)

Early signs of a detached retina

A detached retina has to be examined by an ophthalmologist right away. Otherwise, you could lose vision in that eye. Call an ophthalmologist immediately if you have any of these symptoms:

- Seeing flashing lights all of a sudden. Some people say this is like seeing stars after being hit in the eye.
- Noticing many new floaters at once. These can look like specks, lines or cobwebs in your field of vision.
- A shadow appearing in your peripheral (side) vision.
- A gray curtain covering part of your field of vision.

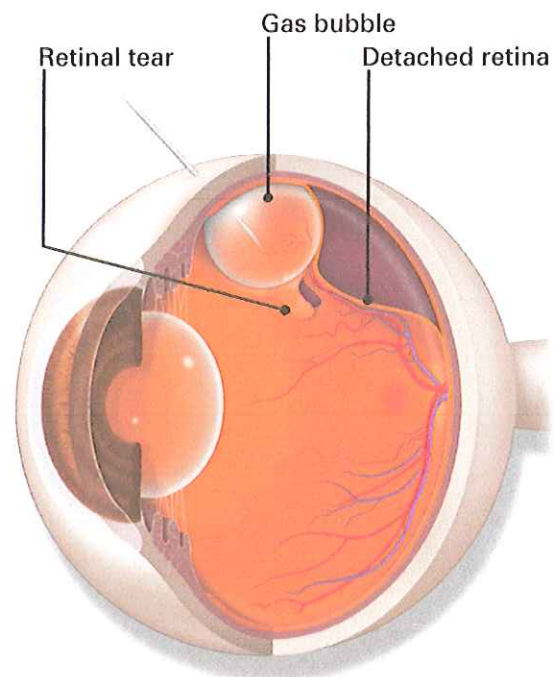
How is a detached retina diagnosed?

Your ophthalmologist will put drops in your eye to dilate (widen) the pupil. Then they will look through a special lens to check your retina for any changes.

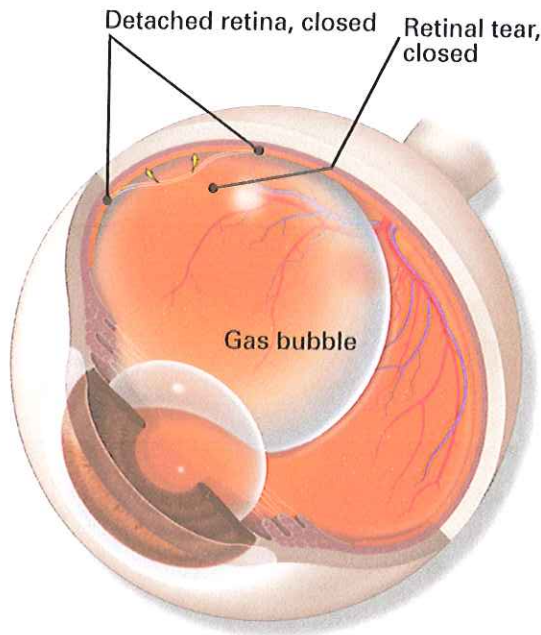
How is a detached retina treated?

Surgery is done to repair a detached retina. Here are some types of detached retina surgery:

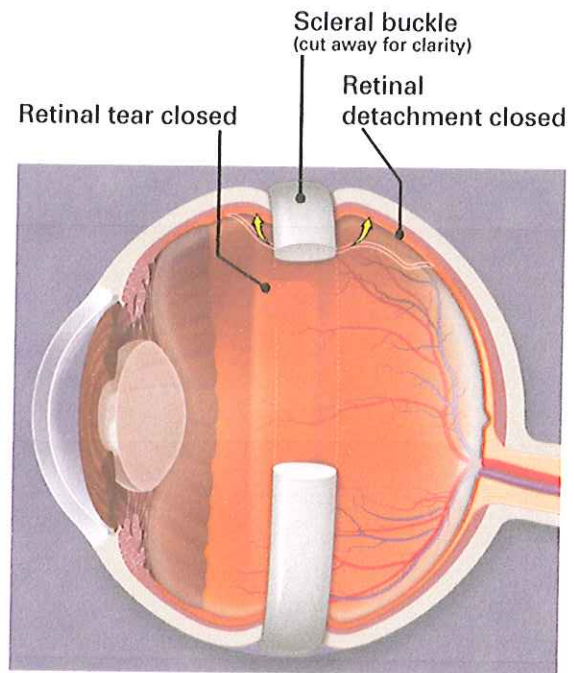
Pneumatic retinopexy. Your ophthalmologist puts a gas bubble inside your eye. This pushes the retina into place so it can heal properly. Afterwards, you will need to keep your head in a very specific position as your doctor recommends for a few days. This keeps the bubble in the right place. As your eye heals, your body makes fluid



A gas bubble is injected inside the eye to help a detached retina heal.



You must keep your head in a specific position for a period of time so the bubble can hold the detached retina in place.



A scleral buckle is placed on the eyeball to help a torn or detached retina heal against the eye wall.

that fills the eye. Over time, this fluid replaces the gas bubble.

Vitrectomy. Your ophthalmologist removes the vitreous pulling on the retina. The vitreous will be replaced with an air, gas, or oil bubble. The bubble pushes the retina into place so it can heal properly. If an oil bubble is used, your ophthalmologist will remove it a few months later. With an air or gas bubble, you cannot fly in an airplane or travel to high altitudes. This is because altitude change causes the gas to expand, increasing eye pressure.

Scleral buckle. A band of rubber or soft plastic is sewn to the outside of your eyeball. It gently presses the eye inward. This helps the detached retina heal against the eye wall. You will not see the scleral buckle on the eye. It is usually left on the eye permanently.

What are the risks of surgery for detached retina?

All surgery has risks of problems. But if you do not treat a detached retina, you could quickly lose your sight. Here are some of the risks of surgery for detached retina:

- Eye infection
- Bleeding in your eye
- Glaucoma, when pressure increases inside the eye
- Cataract, when the lens in your eye becomes cloudy
- Need for a second surgery
- Chance that the retina does not reattach properly
- Chance that the retina detaches again