



Vitreous Hemorrhage

Vitreous hemorrhage is blood in the middle (vitreous cavity) of the eye. If the blood is near the center, it can blur or block your vision. If the blood is away from the center, it may have minimal or no impact on your vision.

Vitreous hemorrhage can result from a variety of retinal diseases which are discussed in separate handouts. Sometimes the cause of vitreous hemorrhage is unknown until the blood either resolves on its own or is removed surgically.

WHAT CAUSES VITREOUS HEMORRHAGE?

Common causes of vitreous hemorrhage include proliferative diabetic retinopathy, retinal vein occlusion, posterior vitreous detachment, and retinal tear. There are numerous other possible causes that your BARA surgeon may discuss with you depending on the specifics of your case. In cases of dense vitreous hemorrhage, your doctor cannot see the retina behind the blood and ultrasound can be used to make sure that the retina remains intact and does not require emergency surgery.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR VITREOUS HEMORRHAGE TO CLEAR?

Unlike a bruise in your skin that resolves on a predictable timeline, blood in the eye is somewhat unpredictable. Vitreous hemorrhage can clear in days, weeks, or months. In some cases, the body cannot clear the blood on its own.

Floaters due to vitreous hemorrhage will often vary day to day or hour to hour, since the eye is like a snow globe and vitreous hemorrhage can settle with gravity and then swirl back into the vision unexpectedly.

WILL MY VISION BE NORMAL AFTER THE VITREOUS HEMORRHAGE IS GONE?

In some cases the retina is healthy behind the vitreous hemorrhage and vision may be excellent after the hemorrhage resolves or is removed. In other cases, the retina may be sick from the disease that caused the vitreous hemorrhage (such as diabetes or retinal vein occlusion) or from an unrelated condition, in which case the vision will remain limited even after the vitreous hemorrhage is gone. Your BARA doctor can tell you more about the prognosis in your particular case.

WHEN IS SURGERY APPROPRIATE FOR VITREOUS HEMORRHAGE?

It is generally better to avoid surgery if the vitreous hemorrhage is going to resolve on its own, so in most cases, surgery is considered only if the vitreous hemorrhage has been present for at least one to three months and is not consistently resolving on its own, and the timeline depends in part on the underlying disease and the health of the other eye, as well as how the vitreous hemorrhage is impacting your daily activities. In some cases, surgery is recommended much earlier due to possible or confirmed vision-threatening disease (such as retinal tear or detachment) behind the vitreous hemorrhage.



Bay Area Retina Associates

Diseases and Surgery of the Retina and Vitreous

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Bay Area Retina Associates is a group practice of retinal surgeons. All members of the group are board-certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and have completed fellowship training in the medical and surgical care of retinal diseases. All BARA surgeons have expertise in the treatment of common diseases such as age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and retinal detachment, as well as rare diseases. We have served the Bay Area community for 35 years.