

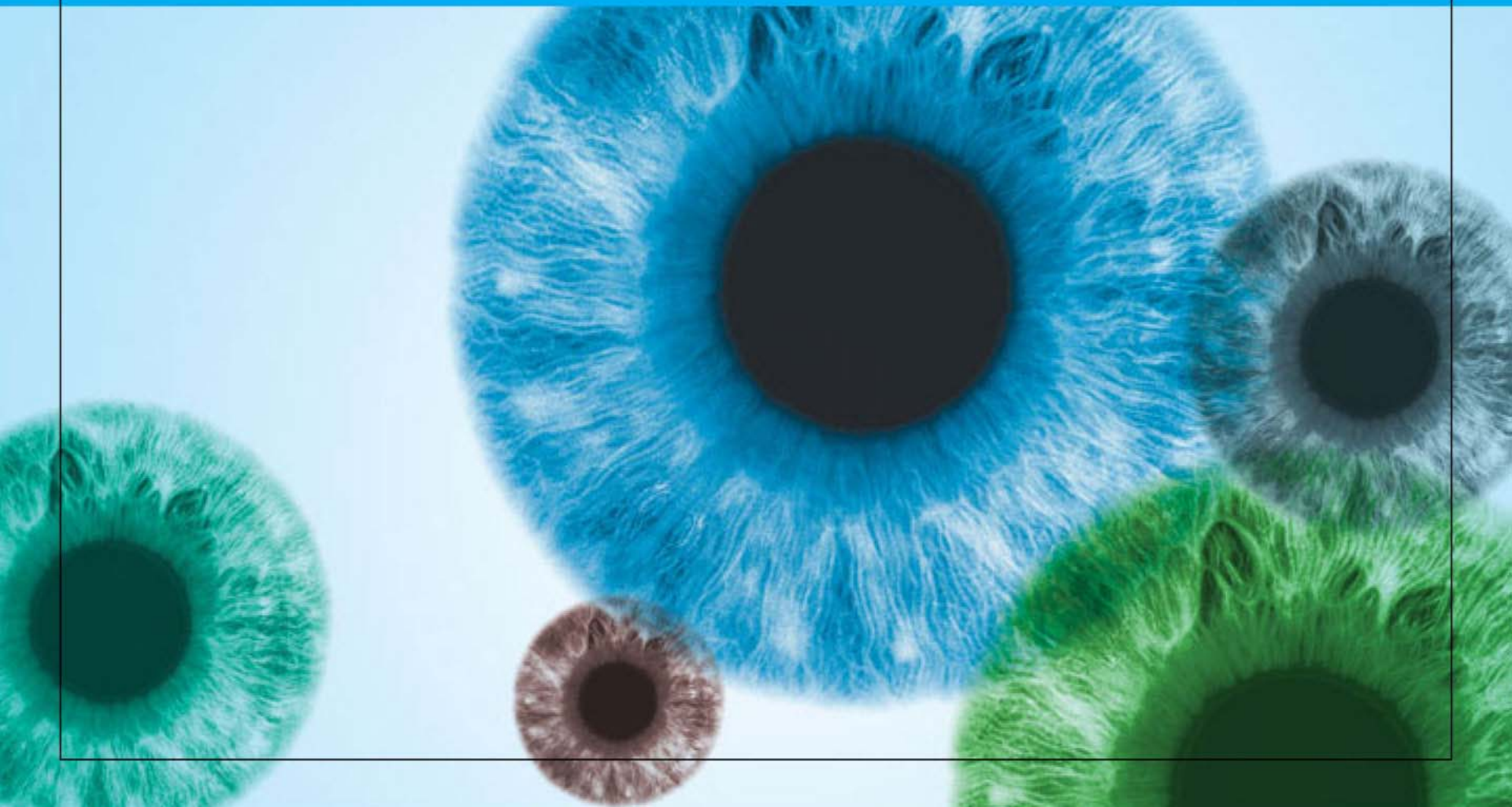
Floaters and Flashes

• **Information and Treatment**

Michigan Medical, P.C.

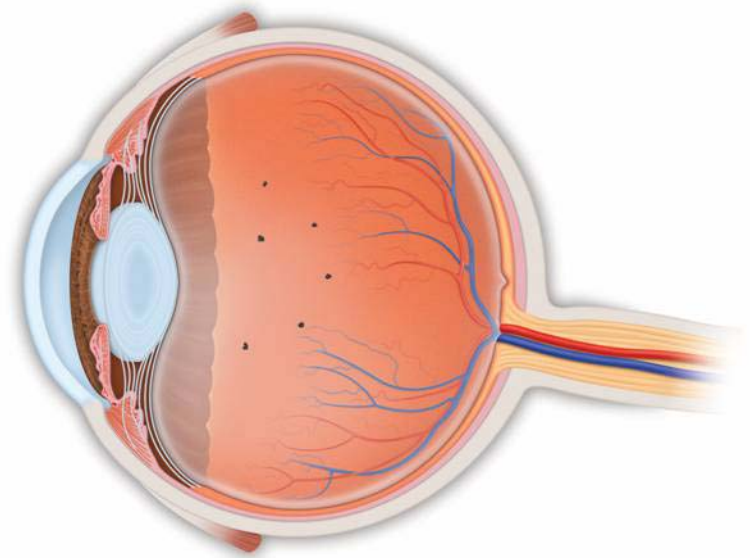
Ophthalmology

Dr. Marko Habekovic



What are floaters?

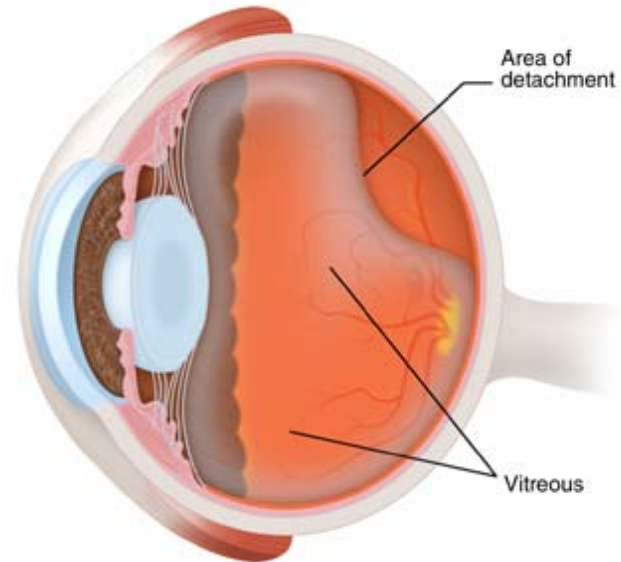
- **Floaters are specks or clouds moving in your field of vision.**
- **Most often seen when looking at a plain background, like a wall or sky.**
- **While floaters look as if they are moving outside the eye, they are actually tiny clumps of gel or cells in the *vitreous* (clear, gel-like fluid inside the eye).**



Floaters in the vitreous gel

What causes floaters?

- **Posterior vitreous detachment:**
As you age, vitreous gel thins or shrinks, forming clumps inside the eye and pulling away from the back wall of the eye.



Posterior vitreous detachment

What causes floaters?

- **Posterior vitreous detachment is more common for people who:**
 - Are nearsighted
 - Have had cataract or YAG surgery
 - Have had inflammation inside eye
 - Have had eye injury

Can floaters be dangerous?

- **A small amount of bleeding in the eye may occur as the result of posterior vitreous detachment and may appear as new floaters.**
- **Posterior vitreous detachment can lead to retinal detachment—see your ophthalmologist immediately.**

What can be done about floaters?

- **Shift your eyes up and down to move the floaters out of the way.**
- **If you are over 45 years old and suddenly see three or more new floaters, see your ophthalmologist immediately.**
- **The sudden appearance of floaters can be an indication of a tear in the retina, caused by the pulling of the vitreous.**
- **If a tear is detected, it can be treated, preventing a retinal detachment.**

What are flashes?

- **Flashes occur when the vitreous (the gel-like substance within the eye) rubs or pulls on the retina.**
- **The flashes of light can appear off and on for several weeks or months.**

What are flashes?

- **Some flashes of light appear as jagged lines or “heat waves” in both eyes and can last 10 to 20 minutes.**
- **These are usually caused by a spasm of blood vessels in brain.**
- **If a headache follows the flashes, it is called a migraine headache.**
- **If a headache does *not* follow the flashes, it is called ocular migraine.**

What causes flashes?

- **Trauma to the eye; commonly experienced when you are hit in the eye and see “stars.”**
- **As you age, it is more common to experience flashes.**

Trauma to the eye

- **Trauma to the eye can often cause floaters and flashes.**
- **Common ocular injuries result from:**
 - Baseball, golf, paintball, racquetball, tennis, hockey, field hockey
 - Firecrackers, bottle rockets
 - Slingshots, BB or pellet guns
 - Rocks, metal and debris thrown from lawnmowers, trimmers, grinders or hammering
- **Always wear protective eyewear during sports or dangerous activities.**



Preserve good vision with regular eye exams

- **You should visit your ophthalmologist immediately if you:**
 - Are over 45 years of age, and suddenly see three or more new floaters.
 - See flashes of light.

Preserve good vision with regular eye exams

You should regularly visit your ophthalmologist at the following intervals:

- **Age 20-29 years: At least once during this period.**
 - Those with risk factors for glaucoma (people of African descent or those who have a family history of glaucoma) should be seen every 3-5 years.
- **Age 30-39 years: At least twice during this period.**
 - Those with risk factors for glaucoma (people of African descent or those who have a family history of glaucoma) should be seen every 2-4 years.
- **Age 40-64 years: Every 2-4 years.**
- **Age 65 years or older: Every 1-2 years.**