



EPIRETINAL MEMBRANE

What is an epiretinal membrane?

An epiretinal membrane (also known as a **macular pucker**) is a layer of scar tissue that grows on the surface of the retina, causing distortion and blurring in your central vision.

How does an epiretinal membrane affect vision?

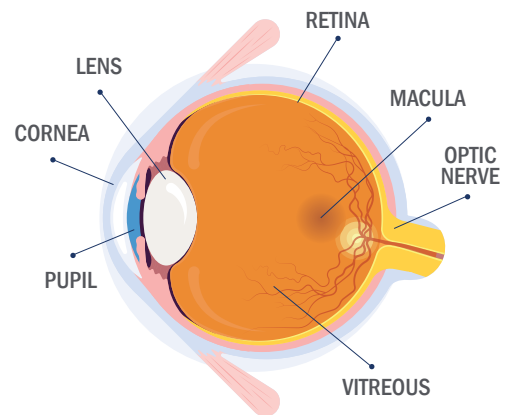
Light enters the eye and is focused onto the **retina**, the light-sensing part of the eye. This information is transmitted through the **optic nerve** to the brain where it is interpreted as the images you see.

The **macula** is the central area of the retina and is the only area that can see fine details. To work properly, it lies flat against the back of the eye. As we age, scar tissue, or membranes (like cellophane), can grow on the surface of the retina. Often, the membrane remains flat and causes little or no vision problems. In some cases, it contracts and causes the retina to wrinkle. This affects your central vision, making it difficult to perform certain activities such as reading fine print, recognizing faces or threading a needle.

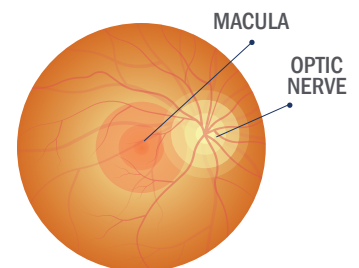
Eye conditions associated with an epiretinal membrane

- Vitreous detachment
- Inflammation inside the eye
- Retinal tear and detachment
- Previous eye trauma (injury/surgery)
- High pressure in the eye
- Damage to blood vessels inside the eye

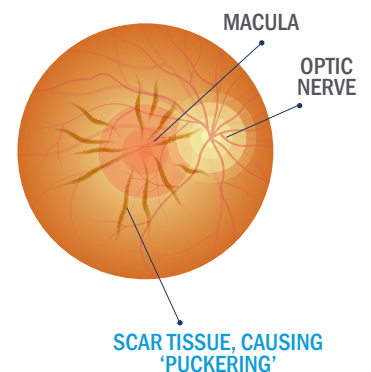
HEALTHY EYE



ANGLED VIEW



AFFECTED EYE



Symptoms of an epiretinal membrane

- Blurry central vision
- Distorted or 'wavy' vision
- Gray or blurred spot in central vision
- Difficulty reading or performing tasks that require detailed vision

Examination and diagnostic testing

An epiretinal membrane can often be diagnosed by your eye doctor during an eye exam. It may be further evaluated using special tests such as **fluorescein angiography** and **optical coherence tomography (OCT)**.

Treating an epiretinal membrane

For mild symptoms, we may observe only with no treatment necessary. Keeping your eyeglass prescription updated can help maximize vision.

Significant vision loss is treated with a surgical procedure called **vitrectomy with membrane peeling**. Your physician will use fine instruments to gently peel the membrane away from the surface of the macula. This outpatient procedure is performed in the operating room under local anesthesia with sedation.

Vision usually improves gradually after surgery, most of it within the first three to four months. Vision does not return to normal, but for most patients, visual distortion decreases significantly. In few cases, vision may not improve.

Complications of vitrectomy surgery

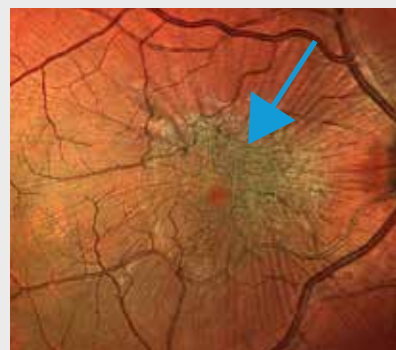
- Cataract formation
- Retinal tear and detachment
- Eye infection
- High pressure in the eye
- Poor vision
- Bleeding in the eye
- Recurrence of scar tissue

WHAT YOUR DOCTOR SEES

With Photography

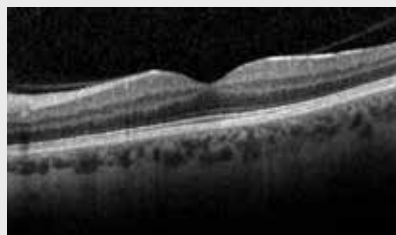


Normal Macula

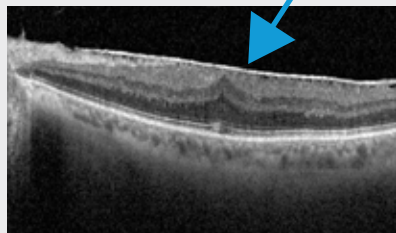


Epiretinal membrane with puckering

On OCT



Normal macula, as seen on OCT



Epiretinal membrane causing macular distortion, seen on OCT