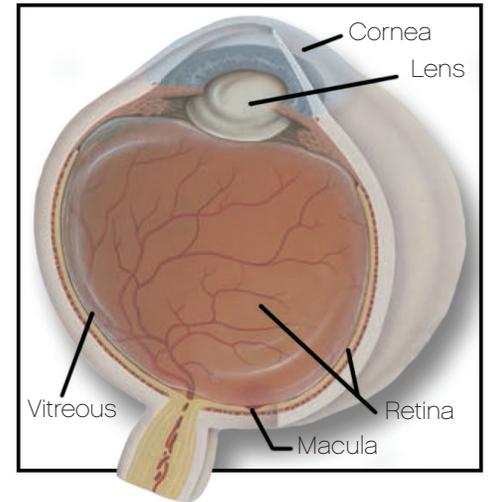


# VITRECTOMY SURGERY

## **What is vitrectomy surgery?**

The middle of the eye is filled with a jelly-like substance called vitreous. Light that enters the eye passes through the vitreous and hits the retina, the light-sensing part of the eye. When light is focused onto the retina this information is transmitted through the optic nerve to the brain where it is interpreted as the images you see. Many diseases affecting the retina and vitreous can be treated with surgery. A vitrectomy is a surgery used to treat diseases of these tissues and is performed in the operating room.



### **Eye problems that may be treatable with a vitrectomy**

- Some types of retinal detachment
- Macular holes
- Some forms of diabetic retinopathy
- Macular pucker
- Severe trauma
- Infections inside the eye
- Certain conditions associated with cataract surgery including retained lens material or a dislocated intraocular lens

### **What are the risks of a vitrectomy?**

- Cataract progression
- Bleeding in the eye
- Infections in the eye
- Retinal tear or detachment
- High pressure in the eye
- Poor vision
- Recurrence of your underlying problem
- Pain

## **How can a vitrectomy improve my vision?**

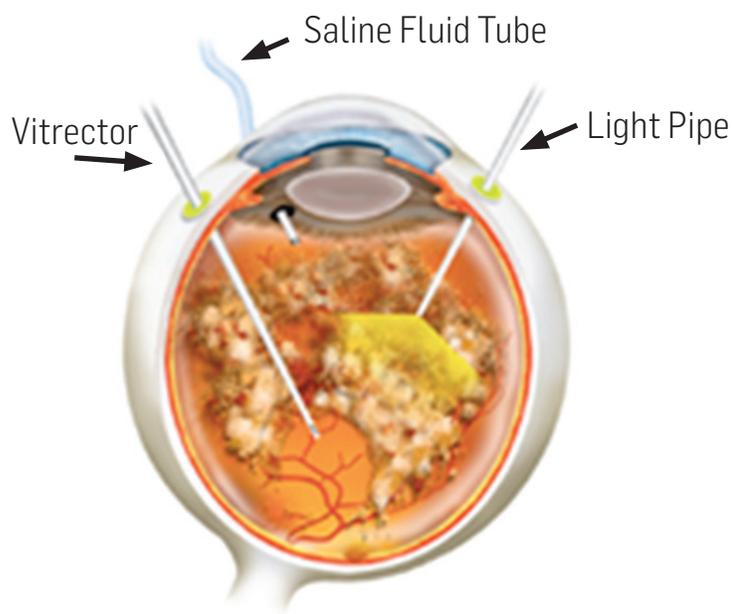
A vitrectomy can often improve or stabilize vision. The surgery can facilitate reattaching a detached retina and closing retinal holes. Additionally, the surgery can remove blood, debris and scar tissue that may be limiting your vision.

## **What can I expect before and during my vitrectomy?**

Vitrectomy surgery requires a team approach. Before surgery you will likely need to have a physical examination with your general doctor to identify and possibly treat any medical conditions. Your surgeon and anesthesiology team will decide whether local or general anesthesia is appropriate for you.

Most vitrectomy surgeries are performed as outpatient procedures with local anesthesia and the patient may go home the same day. The length of the operation varies from 20 minutes to several hours depending on your condition. Other procedures may be combined with your vitrectomy including peeling membranes or laser application depending on your condition.

Your surgeon will perform your vitrectomy using a microscope and fine instruments that are placed into your eye through small incisions in the sclera, the white part of your eye.



**Schematic diagram  
of vitrectomy surgery**



**Postoperative face down  
positioning following vitrectomy  
surgery inpatient with  
gas bubble in eye**

## **What happens after surgery?**

The healing process after surgery may take several weeks to months depending on your underlying disease. Your eye may be red and you can expect to experience some minor discomfort. Your surgeon will discuss with you the best way to manage any potential discomfort. You will be prescribed eye drops and given clear instructions about how and when to use them. Your ophthalmologist will advise you when to resume normal daily activities.

If your vitrectomy surgery requires gas or oil to be placed inside your eye, your surgeon may advise you to keep your head in a special position for a specific time period ranging from a few days to weeks. This is a very important part of your recovery as proper positioning allows the gas or oil inside your eye to press the layers of your retina together, thus promoting healing.

If you have a gas bubble inside of your eye, you cannot fly in an airplane or travel at high altitudes until the bubble is gone because an increase in altitude can cause a dangerous rise in your eye pressure. You must also not undergo certain other surgeries until your gas bubble is gone (especially general anesthesia using nitrous gas). Your ophthalmologist will advise you when your gas bubble is gone.

**If you have any questions or concern, please call us at  
713.524.3434 or 800.833.5921.**