Ophthalmology Department

Macular Pucker

What is the macula?

The macula is a small area at the centre of the retina in the back of the eye that allow us to see fine details clearly and perform activities such as reading and driving.

What is macular pucker?

Macular pucker as the name suggest is wrinkling of the retina secondary to scar tissue formation on its surface. The scarring is caused by a degenerative process in the vitreous (jelly of the eye), which is mostly age-related but can sometimes be caused by inflammation or trauma.

What are the symptoms?

Your vision will be blurred or distorted due to the presence of the scar tissue and the crinkling of the retina underneath.

What is the treatment?

An operation called VITRECTOMY, is a type of eye surgery used to treat disorders of the retina (the light-sensing cells at the back of the eye) and vitreous (the clear gel-like substance inside the eye).

During a vitrectomy operation, the surgeon makes tiny (less tha 0.5 mm in size) incisions in the sclera (the white part of the eye).

Using a microscope to look inside the eye and microsurgical instruments, the surgeon removes the vitreous and removes the scar tissue from the retina through the tiny incisions.

During the procedure, the retina may be treated with a laser to fix a tear in the retina if present. A gas bubble that slowly disappears on its own may be placed in the eye to help the retina remain in its proper position.

compassionate care

After vitrectomy you are expected to develop a cataract within 6 months to a year. Cataract is an opacity or misting within the lens of the eye and requires a subsequent operation called cataract extraction. However, cataract surgery can be performed at the same time as the vitrectomy. This will avoid having to return for a second operation in due course.

What will my vision be like after the operation?

The vision will be very blurred for a few weeks after the operation and following the injection of gas bubble you may see a wobbly black rim appear in your line of vision. The bubble will move as you move and may stay with you for 1 - 2 weeks. It will gradually get smaller, or may break up into small bubbles before disappearing. The eye will secrete clear fluid replacing that which was removed during the operation.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Vitrectomy surgery for macular pucker often improves or stabilizes vision and distortion. Vision after surgery depends on how damaged the retina was before surgery.

Are there any risks involved?

As with any procedure there is a small risk of complications.

Some possible complications after the operation:

- Bleeding inside the eye (1 in 4000).
- Detached retina (1 in 200) which can lead to loss of sight
- Infection in the eye (1 in 2000) which can lead to loss of sight.

Complications are rare and in most cases can be treated effectively. In a small proportion of cases further surgery may be needed. Very rarely some complications can result in blindness.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Ophthalmology Department

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