

VITRECTOMY

What is vitrectomy?

Vitrectomy is a type of eye surgery that corrects the disorders of the retina and the vitreous.

A light sensitive tissue layer called retina is present at the back of the eye. It sends light to rays to the brain through the optic nerve.

Vitreous is a clear jelly like transparent fluid that fills the posterior chamber of the eye. It gives shape to the eyeball just like air gives shape to a balloon.

The clear and transparent nature of this fluid allows the light rays which fall on the eye to pass through and reach the retina without any hindrance.

Diseases which affect the vitreous

A large number of blood capillaries are found in the retina. These capillaries may get affected and bleed due to the following reasons:

- Diabetic Mellitus
- Retinal Vascular Occlusions
- Blood pressure
- Eale's disease
- Severe trauma of the eye
- Symptomatic Posterior Vitreous detachment
- Retinal detachment

The blood enters the vitreous and makes the clear vitreous opaque. When the vitreous loses its transparent nature, vision is affected.

Preoperative examination

Before undergoing vitrectomy, the patient will have to undergo a complete physical examination. The surgeon, then, views the inside of the eye through the ultrasound procedure (B Scan Ultrasonography). He/She also determines the type of anaesthesia suitable for the patient. The patient may have to stay overnight in the hospital.

Vitrectomy

The surgery time varies from one to two hours. As a first step, an injection will be given to numb the eye. The vitreous clouded with blood, will be removed by surgery and simultaneously replaced either by a clear salt solution, gas bubble or an oil called silicone oil. In a short duration, the salt solution or gas bubble will slowly disappear on its own and later replaced by fluid secreted by the eye. Patients with silicone oil in their eye will need removal of the oil after 3 to 6 months. Laser treatment will be given to the damaged blood vessels.

Postoperative care

- Eye drops should be used regularly as prescribed by the doctor.
- Patients who have undergone vitrectomy should not do any strenuous work for a 30 days.
- The patient should not lift heavy weights/objects in the immediate postoperative period.

For those patients treated by gas bubble technique:

- While sleeping or lying down, patients should lie on their stomach for nearly 15 days.
- Should put the head/face down while sitting.
- Should avoid travelling by airplane for 45 days after surgery because the pressure will rise dangerously at higher altitudes. They can travel by bus or train.

Can vitrectomy be performed for the second time?

The patient can undergo vitrectomy for the second time if necessary under the advice of the doctor. Vitrectomy may not cause any problem and is quite safe and effective