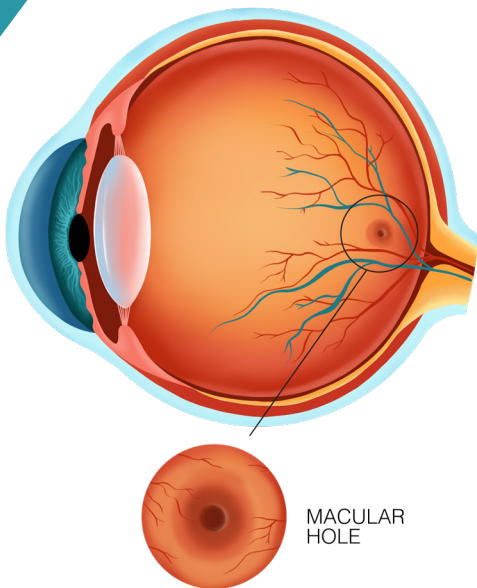


MACULAR HOLES

Macular holes are tears in the macula, which cause a defect or dark spot in the central vision.



MACULAR HOLES

Macular holes are tears on the macula, which cause a defect or dark spot in the central vision. This can result in distortion and a loss of central vision.

THE MACULA

The macula is the central part of the retina - the layer inside the eye on which light is focused by the cornea and lens. The retina responds to light and transmits signals to the brain, thus enabling us to see.

Different parts of the retina perform different tasks. The macula is responsible for central vision. It is also best positioned to pick up colour and perceive fine detail.

SYMPTOMS

Macular holes result in degeneration of central (straight-ahead) vision. In the early stages, this may be a slight blurring or distortion of vision. As the hole enlarges, central vision worsens to the point where the afflicted eye can only see the top row of an eyesight testing chart.

CONTRIBUTING RISKS

There are certain factors which increase your risk of developing macular holes. These include:

- Age: macular holes are most common in people in their sixties and seventies, although they can occur in other age groups.
- Gender: women are more susceptible to macular holes than men.
- Existing macular holes: Having a macular hole in one eye results in a greater risk of developing a hole in the other eye.
- Severe myopia (near-sightedness).

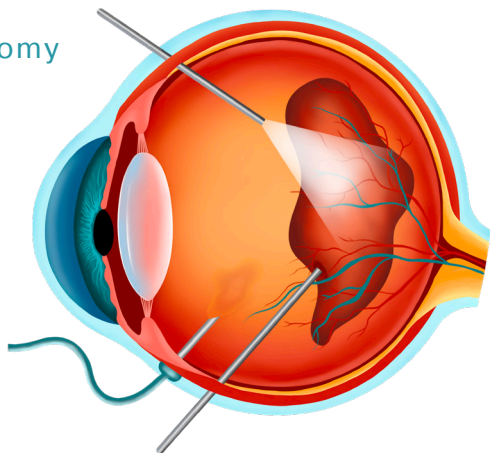
TREATMENT

Macular hole surgery involves removal of the vitreous jelly, a procedure known as a vitrectomy. This can be carried out under local or general anaesthesia. This involves the removal of the vitreous jelly, the thick, transparent substance that fills the centre of the eye, and its replacement with a clear salt solution, air, or sometimes gas. This process enables the surgeon to access and remove the membranes holding the macular hole open.

Once the traction is released, the hole can be closed. The success of the surgery is dependent on the hole remaining 'sealed'. A gas bubble is placed in the eye to help repair and assist in keeping the macular hole closed.

A vitrectomy has little impact on the health of the eye. With time, the saline solution or gas will become replaced by the eye's own fluids.

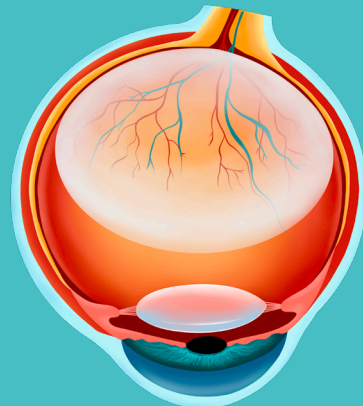
Vitrectomy



A vitrectomy involves first removing the vitreous gel to prevent it from pulling on the retina.

A gas bubble is placed in the eye to help repair and assist in keeping the macular hole closed. Because of this gas bubble, you will be required to hold your head in a certain position (e.g. lying face down) for a few days.

Gas bubble in the eye



RECOVERY PERIOD

Recovery will usually last 2-4 weeks and you will probably need to take at least a week off work to accommodate this. Because of the gas bubble you will need to look down for a few days. Oasis surgery has some devices to help assist with this and your nurses can give you tips on how to manage. After your surgery, the surgeon will discuss the necessary posture requirements. Air travel is not possible for the time the gas bubble remains in your eye (most commonly 3 weeks).



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