

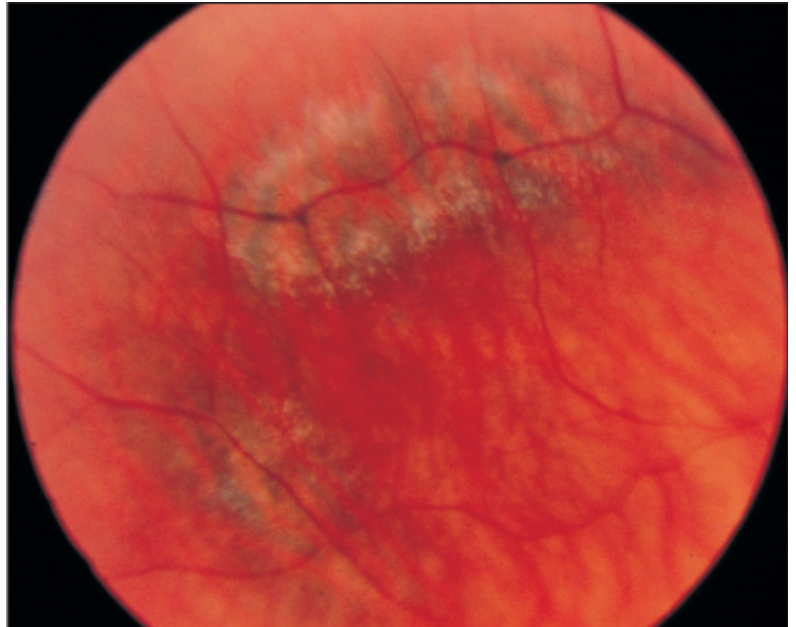
Lattice Degeneration of the Retina

This is a feature that your eye Doctor or Optometrist will be able to see in the far periphery of your eye. You will not notice it yourself.

Concern about the risk of developing a retinal detachment has been expressed and this handout puts into perspective the small risk that exists.

Lattice degeneration of the retina is present in about 7-8% of adult eyes. Burton has shown that patients with lattice degeneration, between 40 and 60 years of age, and with low to moderate degrees of myopia tend to develop detachments caused by premature posterior vitreous separation and traction tears.

However, he points out that prophylaxis for this group is not warranted, because only 5-10% will experience detachments during their lives.



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On the other hand, this study verified the previous suspicions that those with myopia exceeding $-5.0D$ and lattice degeneration have an increased risk of detachment during their lives. Detachments in this group tend to cluster in the second, third, and fourth decades, typically are caused by atrophic holes, are slowly progressive, and often are simultaneously bilateral. Enhanced vigilance is certainly appropriate during this time, but prophylactic treatment would be no small task because, as Burton points out, within a population of 1 million persons there are about 1150 aged 10-39 years with myopia exceeding $-5.0D$ and lattice degeneration. Only 4 detachments annually and 40 detachments in 10 years would be expected in this highest risk group.

Conclusion

In an evidence-based analysis of prophylactic treatment of asymptomatic retinal breaks and lattice degeneration, a panel of vitreoretinal experts reviewed the literature published in English. They concluded that there was insufficient information to strongly support prophylactic treatment of lesions other than symptomatic flap tears.

Avoiding risk factors such as trauma is not practical except in avoiding boxing as a sport. However should you notice a change in your vision, new floaters especially lots of small floaters or any flashing of lights in your eyes, you should see an eye Doctor as soon as possible.

In addition an annual review of your eyes with an optometrist is a good idea asking him or her to look at the periphery of the eye particularly carefully.