

Lattice Degeneration

Patient information leaflet

What has been found

During the examination of the outer edges of your retina, areas of thinning were seen. They have a criss-crossed appearance, which is where the name lattice degeneration comes from. They lie well outside the part of the retina used for reading and recognising faces.

It is common, particularly in short-sighted eyes, and it often runs in families. It causes no symptoms and does not affect your vision.

Why it matters

The vitreous jelly is more firmly attached at the edges of these thin patches. When the jelly separates from the retina with age — a normal change — it can pull harder there, and occasionally tear the retina. An untreated tear can lead to a retinal detachment.

To keep this in proportion: the great majority of people with lattice degeneration never have any problem from it. What it changes is not your daily life but your threshold for being seen quickly if symptoms appear.

Contact the clinic the same day if you notice

- A sudden shower of new floaters, or a marked increase in the number
- Flashing lights that become more frequent or persistent
- A dark curtain, shadow or veil moving across any part of your vision
- A sudden drop in vision

Is it treated

Usually not. Laser around the thin areas is reserved for selected eyes — for example where there is already a tear, where the other eye has had a detachment, or occasionally before certain operations. Treating every patch of lattice in every eye has not been shown to help, and laser has its own drawbacks.

If you are considering laser vision correction

Lattice degeneration does not necessarily rule it out, but it is a reason for the retina to be examined thoroughly beforehand and sometimes treated first. Please mention it to any surgeon who assesses you.

Follow-up

A dilated examination of the peripheral retina is repeated periodically. Dilating drops blur near vision and increase light sensitivity for four to six hours, so arrange not to drive yourself home and bring sunglasses.

Reviewed by Dr. Aysun Yucel Gencoglu, MD, FEBO, FICO. Further patient information on retinal conditions is published by the American Society of Retina Specialists at asrs.org/patients.

Notes for you from today's consultation

