Detached Retina

A detached retina is caused by an accumulation of fluid leading to the separation of the sensory retina and underlying pigment epithelium. Symptoms may include flashes of light, floaters, and a curtain-like shadow. Interventions for retinal detachment include promoting bed rest, avoiding vigorous activity, wearing an eye patch, and preparing for immediate surgical repair.



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Assessment

Flashes of Light

Flashes of Light

The patient with a detached retina may experience sudden flashes of light in the affected eye. They typically appear at the edge of the visual field and caused by vitreous traction. Flashes of light may be more pronounced against a dark background.

Floaters

Floaties-on-eyes

Retinal detachment may cause the patient to experience floaters in their vision. Floaters are characterized as small bits of debris floating in the patient's field of vision and are caused by clumps of solid vitreous gel or loose blood caused by retinal tear.

Curtain Like Shadow

Curtain Shadow

After the retina detaches, the patient may experience a curtain-like shadow coming across the field of vision. This painless loss of peripheral or central vision corresponds with the area of detachment.

Interventions

Eye Patch

Eye Patch

In patients with detached retinas, an eye patch may be used to help protect the eye. An eye patch worn to protect the eye is especially useful during the night. Instruct the patient to avoid rubbing the eye in order to prevent irritation. After surgical repair, the operative eye is patched to minimize further complications.

Bed Rest

Bed

To prevent further complications, the patient with retinal detachment should maintain bed rest. The patient may be instructed to rest in certain positions to minimize eye pressure and swelling.

Surgical Emergency

Emergency Surgeon

To prevent further deterioration leading to blindness, the patient with retinal detachment may be prepared for immediate surgical repair. Various types of surgery are performed to repair retinal detachment. Laser photocoagulation and cryopexy create an inflammatory reaction that leads to chorioretinal adhesion to seal retinal breaks. Scleral buckling involves indenting the globe in order to move pigment epithelium, the choroid, and the sclera toward the detached retina. Various intraocular procedures, such as pneumatic retinopexy and vitrectomy may also be used to address retinal detachment.

Considerations

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No Vigorous Activity

No-sign Vigorous Activities

The patient with retinal detachment should avoid vigorous activity to prevent further complications. After surgical repair, the level of activity restriction varies depending on the type of surgery and the physician's orders.

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