



Fall 2024

## Focus on Your Eyes

Sometimes strange things happen with our eyes. Within that category is something called posterior vitreous detachment, or PVD.

The vitreous is the gel-like substance that helps form the round shape of our eyes while we are still a fetus. After birth, it serves to cushion and create a slight outward pressure within the eye, protecting it when hit, kind of like a shock absorber. As we age, the vitreous becomes more liquified and can detach from the retina.

“This is a very common process,” said Farhan Hussain, MD, a Henry Ford retinal/vitreous specialist. “The vitreous occupies about 80% of the inside of your eye. Over time, it will begin to thin out. PVD is very common in people over the age of 50, though it can happen as early as the 40s. It also is more common in people with high near-sightedness. It’s estimated that more than 60% of people over the age of 60 have experienced PVD in at least one of their eyes.”

While this is a natural process, it is not without its risks. Dr. Hussain likens it to a piece of tape on a wall. Over time the tape may begin to peel away. However, as the vitreous begins to pull away from the retina it can get stuck and pull some of the retina with it, resulting in a tear or – worst case scenario – a detachment of the retina. This is why it is recommended to see an eye care specialist within 24 hours if you start experiencing symptoms of a PVD. These symptoms include:

- A bright flashing light in the corner of your eye, often described as a shimmering bright waterfall or flashing strobe
- An increase in floaters, usually a large one that resembles a ball of black thread or a spider

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Henry Ford Physician Network

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“Most vitreous detachments are very clean separations,” Dr. Hussain said. “Still, it is important to be seen by an eye care specialist to ensure it is not impacting the retina. If there is a tear in the retina, a retinal specialist can perform laser surgery in the office to repair it and prevent a retinal detachment, which can result in permanent vision loss.”

Other than the symptoms mentioned, most people don't experience any other noticeable occurrences, such as pain or vision impairment, which is why PVD often goes unreported.

“It's important to be monitored during this process,” Dr. Hussain said. “The entire process lasts about six weeks. The floaters will remain, but the brain adjusts, and you stop seeing most of them within weeks or months.”

Ultimately, eye health mimics our overall health, so Dr. Hussain recommends a healthy diet and exercise. If you notice any sudden changes in your eyesight such as blurred or double vision, pain or a sudden increase in the number of floaters, see an eye care specialist.

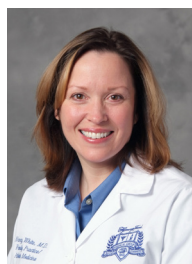
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Henry Ford OptimEyes has 22 locations throughout Southeast Michigan. Find a location near you by going to [www.henryford.com/optimeyes](http://www.henryford.com/optimeyes) or by calling **800-Eye-Care** (800-393-2273).

## Exercise: The Real Magic Healer

Like it or not, exercise is as essential as water to your overall health. Even a 20-minute walk most days can help stimulate chemical changes in your body that can help:

- Increase HDL (good) cholesterol and lower LDL (bad) cholesterol
- Decrease serum glucose as your working muscles use the sugar in your body
- Release endorphins that elevate your mood
- Increase oxygen flow to your brain, muscles and internal organs
- Curb food cravings



“Exercise improves many health conditions and can protect you against heart disease, stroke and certain cancers,” said Henry Ford primary care provider Nancy White, MD, who specializes in Sports Medicine. “Importantly, the heart is a muscle that needs regular exercise to keep it oxygenized and pumping effectively. When this happens, it can decrease the risk of stroke and several cancers.”

In short, many benefits of exercise are invisible to the eye.

“Yes, exercise is a helpful and important part of weight loss,” Dr. White added. “As we age, the positive impact of exercise on our weight is not as easily attained. While you may not see the kind of weight loss results you may have had in the past when you step up your exercise, that doesn't mean it's not working inside your body. Exercise helps to prevent or even reverse so many health issues. This includes osteoporosis, which is a thinning and weakening of the bones; and osteoarthritis, which results from the wear and tear of the joints. Regular exercise lubricates the joints, and by strengthening the surrounding muscles, it protects arthritic joints.

“Anyone who has health issues or who has been sedentary, please first discuss an exercise plan with your doctor. Once you start, you will be amazed how much better you feel and what you are able to do. Most people start seeing results within days and weeks! Even activities such as biking or walking with a friend or playing games that involve moving most of your body are great exercise.”

By focusing on regular activity that gets your body moving, and by adding exercises that improve balance and flexibility, Dr. White said it is possible to stay active well into later years. The key is to be smart about it.

“If you haven't exercised in a while, try slowly starting something that you liked doing in the past,” she said. “Often the first 8-10 minutes are hard, but once you're past that, it gets easier and enjoyable. Gradually, increase your time or repetitions, maybe by 10% each week, to get you into your groove. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week. Start somewhere and work upward. It doesn't matter if you stop 10 times; just restart 11 times!”

# Breaking down exercise

## Walking

- Walking is one of the easiest ways to get moving – all you need are a good pair of walking shoes and motivation!
- Step by step, it strengthens your heart, stabilizes blood pressure and lowers cholesterol, decreasing your risk of a heart attack or stroke.
- Walking briskly for 30 minutes can burn 200 calories, tone your muscles, ease joint pain and increase your range of motion. You might even reduce food cravings.
- It supports physical and mental health, having been proven to decrease stress, relieve depression, improve memory and creativity.
- Incorporate walking throughout your day by walking to nearby errands. Go social with your walk by inviting a friend.

## Bicycling

- This is a low-impact way to stay fit while you sit.
- Regular bicycling increases the efficiency of your immune, cardiovascular, digestive and nervous systems.
- It is both a strength and aerobic exercise, increasing stamina, building muscle, burning fat and boosting your metabolism to burn more calories.
- Swapping your car key for a helmet whenever reasonable is a great way to boost your biking time.
- Thanks to stationary bikes, you can do this exercise indoors or outdoors.

## Strength training

- Staying strong is important to maintain your lifestyle, and vital to aging well.
- With each repetition, strength training improves muscle strength and endurance.
- It can help keep bones from weakening and keep muscles elastic and strong by actually growing them. Staying strong is important to maintaining mobility, flexibility and independence as you get older.
- Strength training includes lifting weights, in addition to participating in yoga and Pilates or using resistance bands. Even your own body weight can be used as a convenient on-the-go weight when doing pushups, squats, lunges and sit-ups.

## Sports and other activities

- Tennis, basketball, pickleball and even bowling can help manage weight and improve cardiovascular health, coordination and cognitive function. They are also great social opportunities and a good way to stay moving.
- HIIT or other specialized training methods offer a quick way to boost your metabolism and your mood. High intensity workouts require less time and burn more calories. Most types of activity – especially high intensity exercise — stimulate the release of endorphins, also known as “happiness hormones.”
- Don’t forget the rest of the family! Playing with your kids or pets in the backyard or at a park counts as exercise, too.



### Avoid Football Injuries

Fall is an exciting, but stressful time for football fans. Remember to pay attention to your heart while watching the Detroit Lions or another favorite team. Breathe and try not to overreact. And if you are experiencing signs of cardiac stress, don't wait until the game is over to get medical attention.

*Always check with your doctor about a new exercise routine. Exercise should challenge you but should never cause an injury.*

## Caring for Self While Caring for Others

Caring for another person can be rewarding, but also difficult and stressful. It can become easy to forget your own needs and responsibilities when pressed for time, leaving self-care nowhere to be found.

According to Veronica Bilicki, RN, Manager of Henry Ford's C.A.R.E. Program<sup>SM</sup>, "neglecting your own health, jobs, finances, hobbies and social activities are signs that you are doing too much."

Prioritizing yourself is not selfish. Instead, it helps to ensure long-term success for everyone involved.

"If we don't invest in our own personal self-care, we drain our batteries," said Henry Ford Chief Clinical Wellness Officer Lisa MacLean, MD. "Through self-care we learn to take care of our bodies and brains, and this gives us the energy and right mindset to care for others."

To assist with this, you can access Henry Ford's C.A.R.E. Resources, which offers online and in-person support groups, art therapy, educational classes, one-on-one individualized guidance and self-care opportunities.

Learn more at [www.henryford.com/visitors/caregivers](http://www.henryford.com/visitors/caregivers). You can also connect with them by calling **866-574-7530** or emailing [CaregiverResources@hfhs.org](mailto:CaregiverResources@hfhs.org).

## Fun (or Not So Fun) Fact

Insomnia is real. But sometimes it's self-induced. This can be especially true for teenagers, half of whom live in a constant state of sleep deprivation.

To get better sleep, try these suggestions:

- Keep a predictable sleep schedule; your body will get used to when it should sleep and wake.
- Get your stomach ready by not overloading it with food too close to bedtime.
- Watch your caffeine intake in late afternoon or the evening, as this can wire you.
- Exercise during the day; this helps you fall asleep at night.
- Try to clear your mind of worries before hitting the hay. A guided meditation can help divert stressful or anxious thoughts to more restful ones.

### Important Phone Numbers

Concierge Team: 866.434.1369

MyCare Advice Line: 866.434.1372



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