

Ophthalmology department

# Lattice degeneration

Information for patients, relatives and carers

## Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about **lattice degeneration** and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

## What is lattice degeneration?

Lattice degeneration is a common change in your retina, a thin layer of nerve tissue that is sensitive to light and lines the back of the eye. The retina becomes abnormally thin with changes in the jelly at the back of the eye and is more likely to tear or break. Studies have shown that it is found in around 6 to 8 per cent of the general population, although it is more common in people who are short-sighted (myopic). The condition is usually identified during a routine eye examination.

## What should I expect with this diagnosis?

Most people with lattice degeneration don't have any symptoms (asymptomatic).

## How am I assessed for lattice degeneration?

Lattice degeneration is usually found during a routine eye examination. If it's found during an appointment at your optician you may be referred to our eye clinic or A&E for further checks.

- When you go to the eye clinic or A&E the nurses will check your vision and eye pressure, and put in eye drops to enlarge your pupils.
- The clinician will have a look at the back of your eyes and discuss the findings with you, including if you have a diagnosis of lattice degeneration. They may also take a photo of the back of your eye to monitor any changes.

For most people, lattice degeneration will not need monitoring and does not require treatment.

For most people this condition will not develop a retinal tear or detachment. Research shows the risk of retinal detachment to be less than 1 per cent over an 11-year period for people with no history of retinal detachment. If any treatment is required, your ophthalmologist (eye doctor) will explain this to you. Rarely, the eye doctor will do a laser or freezing therapy (cryotherapy) of the retina. This could help prevent further problems.

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## What symptoms should I look out for?

If you experience any of the following symptoms, you are strongly advised to attend your nearest eye emergency department (please see the list of these below):

- new floaters (dots and lines that float across everything you look at)
- flashing lights
- areas of 'shadows' or 'curtains' affecting the vision, where part of what you see is greyed and blurred
- a sudden decrease of vision

## Who can I contact for more information?

- Emergency Department at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3245
- Outpatients at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3236
- Outpatients at Charing Cross Hospital - 020 3311 1109/ 1233/ 0137

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net) Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

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Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)

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