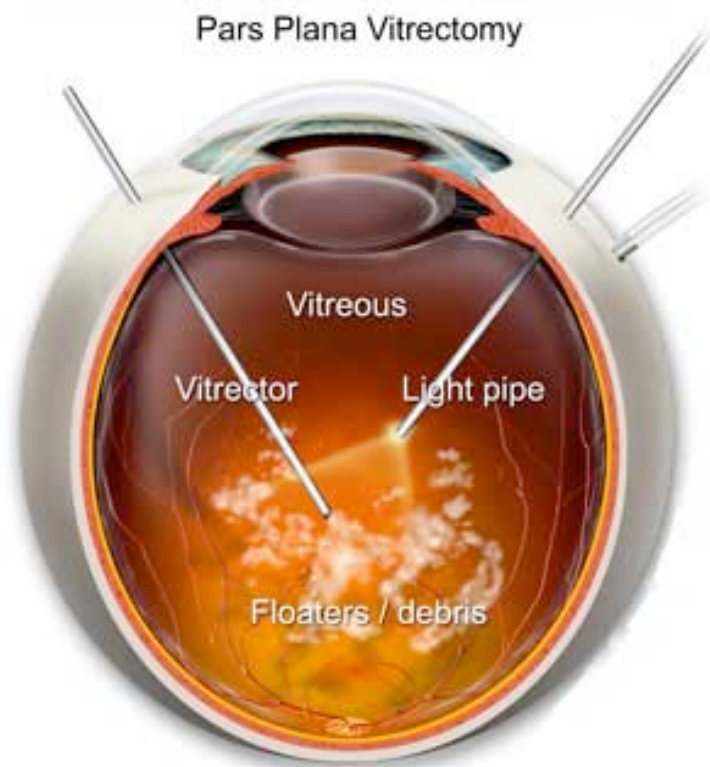


## VITRECTOMY

Vitrectomy is a surgical procedure which removes the clear, gel like tissue that fills the cavity in the back of the eye. It is a generic procedure that is used to address a wide range of problems that affect the back of the eye. These problems almost always involves the retina, the visual sensory tissue of the eye. The removal of the vitreous allows the surgeon to work on the retina. Often the vitreous itself is the cause for the problem and it's removal helps in resolution.

A vitrectomy typically involves the making of three keyhole incisions around the cornea, the clear central disc of the eye. One of the incisions allows a tube to infuse fluid into the eye to keep it formed. Another incision allows a fibre optic light pipe to illuminate the inside of the eye and the third incision allows various other instruments to be passed with which the surgery is carried out. These instruments are the cutting edge of medical technology and includes, high speed (5000 cuts per minute) miniature cutters, LASERs and an array of high tech tools.

As the tissues involved are extremely thin and delicate (measuring in microns), the entire procedure is carried out under a microscope. Modern techniques will often allow the keyhole incisions to seal on their own with out the need for sutures.



Increasingly these procedures are performed under local anaesthesia and the patient is able to go back home the same day. They will require to use steroid and antibiotic drops for a month after surgery. Depending on the condition being treated the surgery takes around an hour to complete. A vitrectomy can run the risk of a retinal detachment, which often requires further surgery to fix it. Like all surgery of the eye there is a significant but small risk of infections or bleeds following surgery.

Common conditions that require a vitrectomy to treat them are retinal detachments, complications of diabetic retinopathy and other disorders of retinal blood supply, degenerative conditions like macular holes and epiretinal membranes, inflammatory conditions, debris obstructing vision (floaters) and complications of cataract surgery.

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