



Lattice Degeneration

What is lattice degeneration?

Lattice degeneration is a thinning of the **retina** that happens over time. About 10 percent of people (1 in 10) have lattice degeneration. You need a healthy retina to see clearly, but most with this condition never have any symptoms or a loss in vision.

Rarely, lattice degeneration can lead to **retinal detachment**. This can cause vision loss, so those with lattice degeneration need routine eye exams.

What causes lattice degeneration?

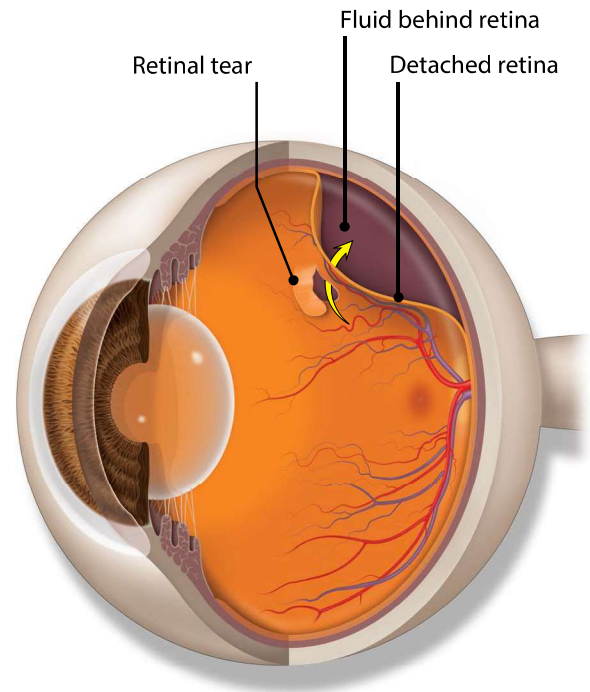
Doctors don't know for sure what causes lattice degeneration. It's not passed down from parents, but people with a family history are more likely to have it. It's also more common in people with:

- myopia (nearsightedness)
- certain diseases like Stickler syndrome and Marfan syndrome

What are symptoms of lattice degeneration?

Lattice degeneration does not have any symptoms. But because the retina is thinner with lattice degeneration, it may tear, break, or get holes easier. This can lead to retinal detachment, which can cause blindness without treatment. Symptoms of retinal tears and detachment are:

- new floaters
- flashing lights



Eye Words to Know

Retina: Layer of cells lining the back wall inside the eye. This layer senses light and sends signals to the brain so you can see.

Retinal detachment: When the retina pulls away from the back of the eye.

- a shadow or gray curtain blocking a part of your vision
- blurry vision or change in vision

If you have any of these symptoms, see your ophthalmologist right away. Treatment can save your vision.

If you see new floaters, flashing lights, or other changes in vision, see your ophthalmologist right away.

How is lattice degeneration diagnosed?

Lattice degeneration does not have any symptoms. It's most often found by your doctor during a normal eye exam.

During the exam, your ophthalmologist uses special eye drops to dilate (widen) your pupils. This gives your doctor a better view of the back of the eye, where the retina is.

Your doctor then uses a slit lamp (tool with a bright light and microscope) to look inside your eye.

How is lattice degeneration treated?

Most people with lattice degeneration do not need treatment, and the condition does not affect their vision. But to protect your vision, it's important to:

- **see your ophthalmologist once a year for an eye exam.** He or she will want to check the health of your eyes and your retina.
- **know the signs of retinal tears and detachment.** If you have any symptoms, call your ophthalmologist right away.

In rare cases, your ophthalmologist may treat you with a laser or cryotherapy (freezing treatment). This strengthens the weakest part of the thinning retina. This hopefully keeps it from tearing or detaching.

If you do get a retinal tear or detachment, your ophthalmologist will use a laser or other surgery to seal the retina back into place.

Summary

Lattice degeneration is a thinning of the retina in the back of the eye. About 1 in 10 people have lattice degeneration, and most don't know they have it because there are no symptoms.

Lattice degeneration is most often diagnosed during a dilated eye exam. Most people with lattice degeneration don't need treatment. But lattice degeneration raises your risk of retinal detachment. This can cause vision loss, so you should see your ophthalmologist once per year for an eye exam.

Get more information about eye health from EyeSmart—provided by the American Academy of Ophthalmology—at aao.org/eyesmart.

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