

EPIRETINAL MEMBRANE

You have been diagnosed with a condition called epiretinal membrane. The retina is the lining of the back of the eye which functions like film in a camera. It collects light which is processed and then transferred to the brain. The center of the retina is called the macula. In some situations, the vitreous, or jelly-like substance, that fills the eye will collapse and pull forward. This can cause some condensation of the vitreous with scar tissue in the form of a membrane. The membrane is somewhat like cellophane in that it wrinkles the surface of the retina.

The membrane can be removed by a surgical procedure called a vitrectomy. The procedure is performed by inserting a tiny needle in the eye which removes the jelly-like substance and then the membrane is peeled from the surface of the retina. The fluid is then replaced with either an air bubble or salt water. The air bubble serves as a splint or tamponade that will push any fluid or edema out of the retina. The air usually dissolves over one to two weeks.

Most patients have improvement of the vision within several weeks of surgery. It may take several months of topical medication or steroid for the best final vision. There may be some minor changes in prescription as well.

As with any operative procedure, there are risks. The greatest risk in eye surgery is losing your eye from an infection or hemorrhage. Additionally, other complications can occur including cataract or retinal detachment. All of these complications are rare but should be considered in any elective eye procedure.

We will usually perform preoperative testing including measurements of the retinal thickness and blood flow in the office. These tests are to ensure a good result and proper healing and to avoid further complications. Other tests of the patient's medical condition will be outlined by the nurse in order to minimize anesthesia risk. Please feel free to discuss any medical problems or concerns with the doctor or nurse before your surgery.

Patient Signature

Date

Relationship to patient

Witness