Patient Information

Lamellar macular holes

The retina is the thin layer of cells that lie at the back of the eyeball, shown in Figure 1. Its role is to sense the light which gets into the eye and to send that information to the brain.

The central part of the retina is called the macula and this is the area we use for reading and recognising complex shapes.

The internal cavity of the eye is filled with a viscous like gel called the vitreous humour. As we get older, this gel can contract and cause a cyst to form on the macula. A break in the front or back wall of the cyst causes a lamellar hole to form. The term “lamellar” refers to partial thickness. A lamellar macular hole (figure 2) is by definition a partial thickness macular hole, where the inner layers of the macula are involved with traction and detached from the underlying cellular layers.

Figure 1: The normal eye

Figure 2: Lamellar macular hole on ocular coherence tomography (OCT) scan
What are the symptoms of lamellar macular hole?
Patients may notice that their vision is blurry or that objects appear distorted. Straight lines such as the edges of doors and windows may appear bent. Sometimes patients may not have any symptoms and their vision may not be affected. In general, the vision does not get progressively worse.

Is it the same as a macular hole?
No. A macular hole is a full thickness defect in the macula.

Is there any treatment for lamellar hole?
Unlike the related condition of full-thickness macular hole, surgery does not help in the treatment of lamellar holes. Although the symptoms of lamellar hole can be annoying, they usually do not progress. Very rarely, a lamellar hole will progress to a full thickness macular hole. If this happens, we can perform an operation to repair the hole by removing the vitreous gel and placing a gas bubble inside the cavity.

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Moorfields Advice helpline
Phone: 020 7566 2345
Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm,
for information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

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Your right to treatment within 18 weeks
Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to start their consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further – see above for contact details. For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, please visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.