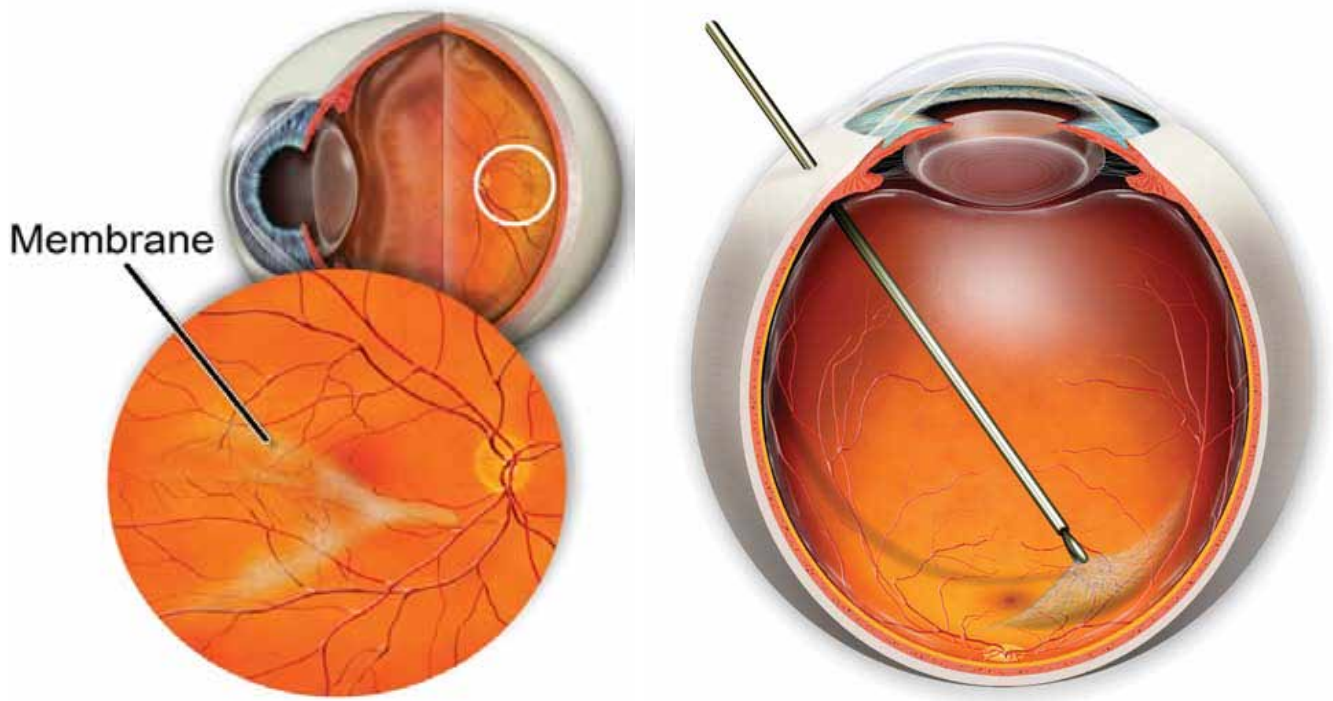


## Epiretinal Membrane & Macular Pucker



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## Epiretinal Membrane & Macular Pucker

Scar tissue can grow on the surface of the retina directly over the macula. This scar tissue causes the retina to wrinkle. The scar tissue on the surface of the retina is called an **epiretinal membrane** or **macular pucker**. An epiretinal membrane can cause visual loss as well as distorted or double vision.

Epiretinal membranes occur more frequently in the older population with studies showing 2% prevalence in individuals aged 50 years and as much as 20% prevalence in individuals aged 75 years. Epiretinal membranes may be caused by a variety of eye problems. However, in most cases, an epiretinal membrane occurs in an otherwise healthy eye.

**Treatment:** Surgical removal is the only treatment for the visual loss caused by an epiretinal membrane. However, if the vision is only mildly reduced, it is often best to observe the condition without performing surgery. If the visual loss or distortion is significant, a vitrectomy surgery may be performed to remove the membrane. During the procedure, the surgeon uses fine instruments to gently lift the membrane and peel it off the surface of the retina. This surgery can be performed under local anesthesia with sedation or general anesthesia.

**Prognosis:** Studies have shown that between 65% and 90% of patients have better vision after surgery when tested on the eye chart. In most cases, visual improvement following epiretinal membrane surgery occurs gradually as the eye heals. Usually there is some visual improvements in the first six weeks, but final visual recovery is not achieved in many patients until at least six months after surgery.

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