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Central Serous Retinopathy (CSR)

Central serous retinopathy is a small, round, shallow swelling that develops on the retina, the light sensitive nerve layer that lines the back of the eye. Although the swelling reduces or distorts vision, the effects are usually temporary. Vision generally recovers on its own within a few months.

In the initial stages of CSR, vision may suddenly become blurred and dim. If the macula-the area of the retina responsible for acute central vision-is not affected, there may be no obvious symptoms.

CSR typically affects adults between the ages of 20 to 50. People with CSR often recover from the retinal swelling without treatment, and return of their original vision occurs within six months of the onset of symptoms. People with recurrent episodes may have some permanent vision loss. Recurrences can affect 20 to 50 percent of people with CSR. While the cause of CSR is unknown, it seems to occur at times of major personal or work related stress.

As CSR usually resolves on its own, no treatment may be necessary. Sometimes laser surgery can reduce the swelling sooner but there is no evidence this improves the final visual outcome. If retinal swelling persists for over three to four months or if an examination reveals early retinal degeneration, laser surgery may be helpful.