

What is an epi-retinal membrane (ERM)?

Epi-retinal membrane (ERM) or also commonly known as a “macular pucker”, occurs when a layer of tissue forms over the macula. ERM is typically slow in progression and can develop with age. Often an ERM can be completely asymptomatic and require no treatment at all. In some cases, an ERM may cause traction on the retina resulting in macular edema. An ERM can commonly be associated with diabetic retinopathy, posterior vitreous detachments, retinal detachment, trauma, and other retinal diseases.

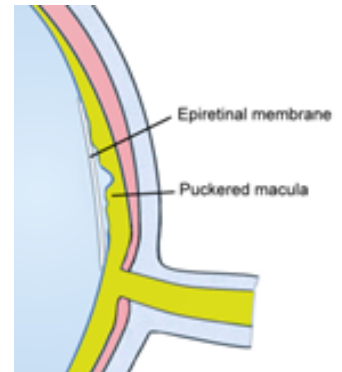


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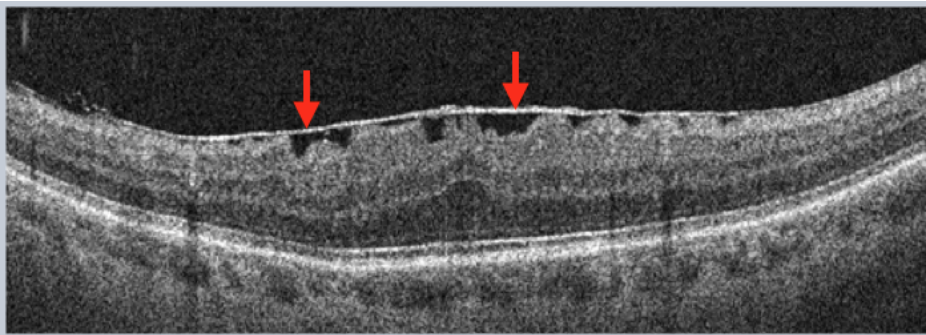


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Signs and Symptoms of ERM

- Blurry vision
- Distorted vision (straight lines appear wavy or bent)
- Double vision that does not go away by covering one eye

Treatment options

If the patient experiences blurry or distorted vision from macular edema associated with ERM, prescription eye drops may be prescribed to help decrease the swelling. If this resolves or alleviates patient symptoms no further action is required.

If the patient's vision has deteriorated to the point that it impairs the patient's lifestyle, the retina surgeon may consider a membrane peel. This surgery is not considered emergent and can be scheduled at the patient's earliest convenience. This surgical procedure is performed under local anesthesia in the operating room. First, the vitreous gel is removed (vitrectomy) to gain access to the retina. Then small instruments are used to peel the ERM from the surface of the macula.

Under certain circumstances it may be indicated to use a gas bubble injected into the vitreous cavity at the time of surgery. This would require the patient to adhere to current post operative positioning for 1-2 weeks following surgery and would prohibit air travel for 4-10 weeks or until gas naturally dissipates.

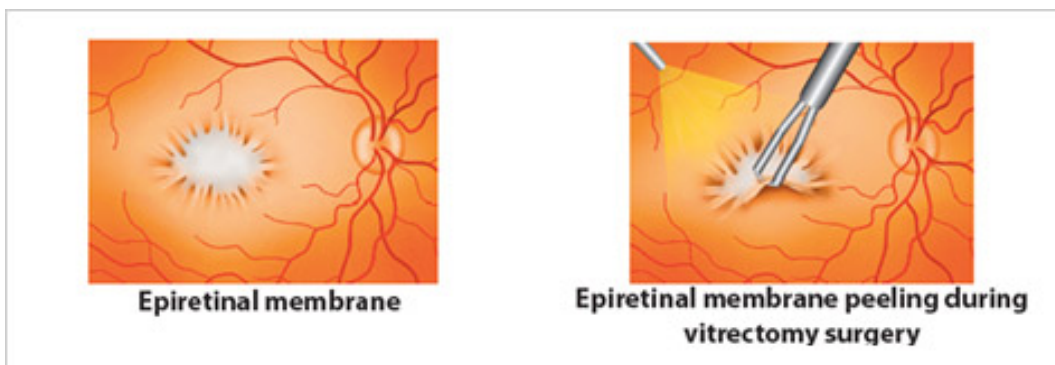


Photo credit: <https://coastaleye.com/epiretinal-membranes/>

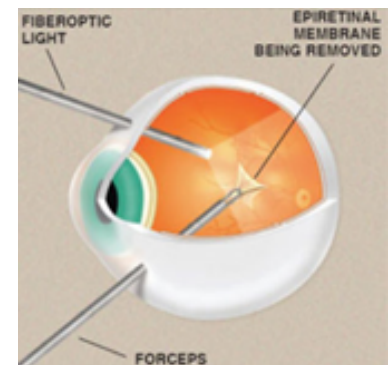


Photo credit: <https://www.ophtalmologyexpertservices.com/>

Surgery FAQs

Will I need a driver for my surgery/ post op appointments?

You will need a driver on the day of your surgery and for your post-operative appointment the following day. Your driver can drop you off at the main entrance and will be called when you are ready to be picked up.

How long will I be at St. Luke's?

Plan to be at St Luke's 4-5 hours on average the day of surgery. Your condition/procedure may vary so it could be shorter or longer