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What Is Glaucoma and Who Needs It?



Glaucoma is a complex eye condition that can lead to permanent vision loss if not detected and managed early. It's often called the "silent thief of sight" because it usually progresses without noticeable symptoms — until it's too late. For patients in Billings, MT, understanding glaucoma is the first step toward preserving their vision for the future.

At **Vance Thompson Vision in Billings, MT**, we specialize in diagnosing and treating glaucoma using advanced tools and personalized care. Whether you're newly diagnosed or concerned about your risk, our glaucoma specialists are here to help you understand what glaucoma is and what your next steps should be.

What Is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is not just one disease — it's a group of eye disorders that damage the optic nerve, often due to high intraocular pressure (IOP). The optic nerve is vital for transmitting visual signals from your eye to your brain. Damage to this nerve can result in irreversible vision loss.

Types of Glaucoma

- **Primary Open-Angle Glaucoma (POAG):**
The most common form in the United States. It develops gradually as the eye's drainage system becomes less efficient, causing increased pressure.
- **Angle-Closure Glaucoma:**
Less common but more acute and dangerous. It occurs when the iris bulges forward, suddenly blocking drainage.
- **Normal-Tension Glaucoma:**
Optic nerve damage occurs even though eye pressure is within normal range — possibly due to poor blood flow or nerve sensitivity.
- **Congenital Glaucoma:**
A rare form that occurs in infants and young children, often diagnosed soon after birth.
- **Secondary Glaucoma:**
Caused by another condition, such as eye trauma, inflammation, or steroid use.

What Causes Glaucoma?

While glaucoma can affect anyone, certain risk factors significantly increase the chances of developing it:

- **Age 60 and older**
- **Family history of glaucoma**
- **High intraocular pressure**
- **Thin corneas**
- **African American, Hispanic, or Asian heritage**
- **Diabetes or high blood pressure**
- **Past eye injuries or surgery**

If you fall into any of these categories, regular glaucoma screenings are crucial — especially if you live in or around Billings, MT. At **Vance Thompson Vision**, we offer comprehensive eye exams that include glaucoma testing for early detection.

Who Needs Glaucoma Screening?

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends that adults undergo a baseline eye disease screening at age 40, followed by regular exams as advised by their doctor.

You should especially consider glaucoma testing if:

- You have a family history of the condition
- You are over age 60
- You've noticed vision loss or peripheral vision changes
- You are at higher risk due to health or ethnic background

Book a consultation today with Vance Thompson Vision in Billings, MT, to see if glaucoma screening is right for you.

What Are the Early Signs of Glaucoma?

Glaucoma often presents no symptoms in its early stages. As it progresses, patients may experience:

- Loss of peripheral (side) vision
- Blurred vision
- Eye pain (especially in angle-closure glaucoma)
- Halos around lights
- Nausea and vomiting (in acute attacks)

Because of its silent onset, **routine eye exams** are the best defense against permanent damage.

How Is Glaucoma Diagnosed?

At **Vance Thompson Vision**, we use state-of-the-art diagnostic technology to evaluate:

- **Intraocular pressure** using tonometry
- **Optic nerve health** through optical coherence tomography (OCT)
- **Visual field testing** to assess peripheral vision loss
- **Corneal thickness** (pachymetry)

This comprehensive approach allows us to catch glaucoma early — even before vision loss occurs.

How Is Glaucoma Treated?

Glaucoma treatment is aimed at lowering intraocular pressure to prevent further optic nerve damage. Options may include:

1. Prescription Eye Drops

These reduce eye pressure by either decreasing fluid production or improving fluid drainage.

2. Oral Medications

Used when eye drops alone aren't effective.

3. Laser Therapy

Minimally invasive procedures such as SLT (Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty) improve fluid outflow.

4. Surgical Options

In more advanced cases, surgery such as MIGS (minimally invasive glaucoma surgery) or trabeculectomy may be necessary.

At **Vance Thompson Vision Billings**, we'll help you find the treatment that fits your lifestyle and severity of disease.

Why Early Detection Matters

Unlike other vision conditions, glaucoma damage cannot be reversed. But with early diagnosis and appropriate treatment, vision loss can be slowed — or even stopped.

This makes timely evaluation critical. Our glaucoma specialists at **Vance Thompson Vision in Billings, MT** are leaders in early detection and personalized care.

Why Choose Vance Thompson Vision for Glaucoma in Billings, MT?

- Fellowship-trained glaucoma specialists
- Advanced diagnostic imaging tools
- Access to the latest treatment options
- Patient-first, education-focused care
- Located conveniently in Billings for residents of southwest Montana

From your first consultation to long-term glaucoma management, we're here to preserve your vision and your quality of life.

Call to Action: Take the First Step Toward Protecting Your Vision

If you're concerned about your risk for glaucoma — or simply due for an eye exam — don't wait. Early action can save your sight. **Contact Vance Thompson Vision in Billings, MT**

Company Description

Vance Thompson Vision Billings takes pride in being world leaders in quality vision correction and setting global standards for excellent patient care in ophthalmology. We specialize in many forms of vision surgery and treatment with a specific focus on LASIK, refractive cataract surgery, glaucoma, cornea care, and oculoplastics.

Contact Details

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Website: <https://www.vancethompsonvision.com/locations/billings/>

Google Site: <https://sites.google.com/view/vancethompsonvision/location/glaucoma-billings/>

Google Folder: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1N-2XfeP_cxcJZI3qkz3H7QtPlfShe8uV?usp=drive_open

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