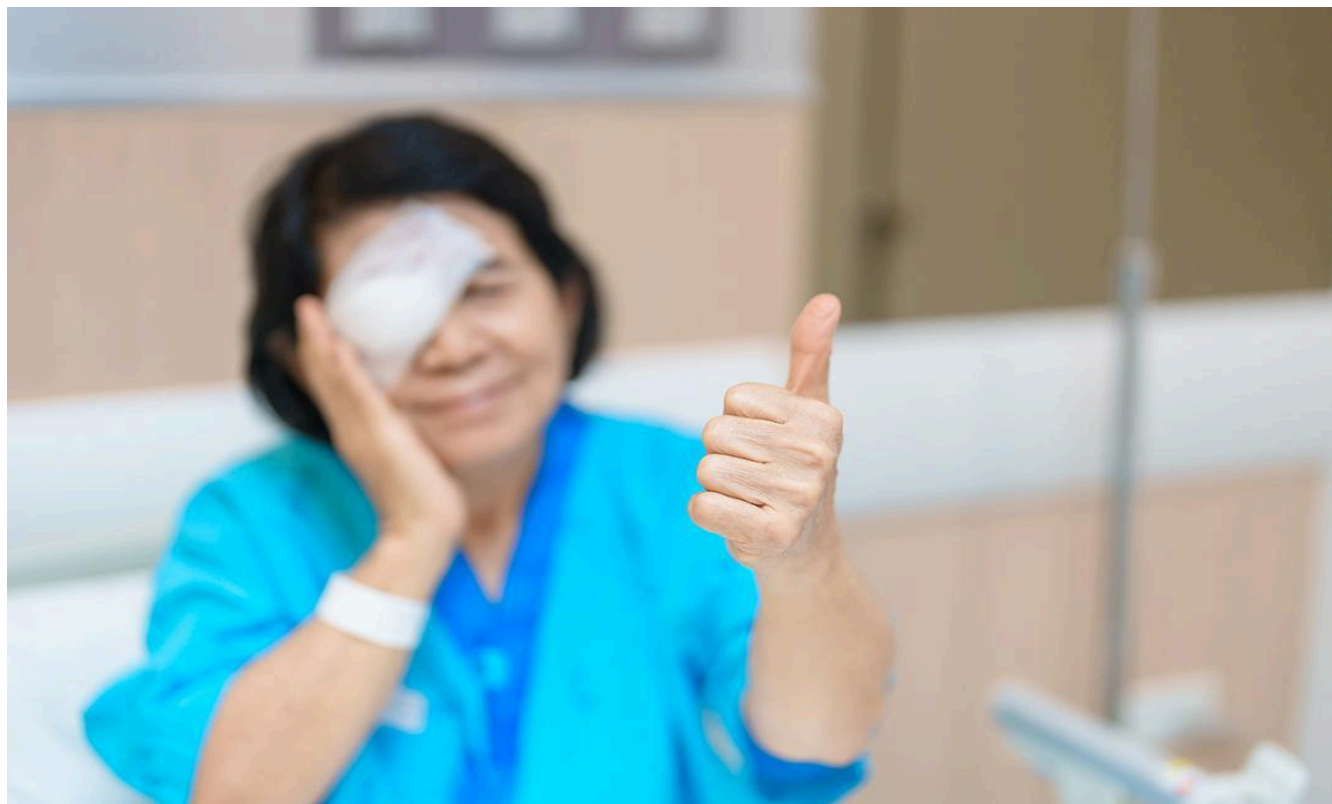


Frequently Asked Questions About Glaucoma



If you or someone you love has been diagnosed with glaucoma — or is at risk — you likely have a lot of questions. What causes it? Will I go blind? Can it be cured?

At **Vance Thompson Vision in Sioux Falls, SD**, we know that understanding your condition is essential to managing it well. In this guide, we answer the most frequently asked questions about glaucoma — with clear, honest, and helpful information from fellowship-trained specialists.

1. What Is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye conditions that damage the **optic nerve**, usually due to high pressure inside the eye (called **intraocular pressure** or IOP). Over time, this damage can lead to vision loss — and even blindness — if not treated.

There are multiple types of glaucoma, including:

- **Primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG)** – the most common type
- **Angle-closure glaucoma** – less common, but more sudden and severe
- **Normal-tension glaucoma** – damage occurs even with normal eye pressure
- **Congenital glaucoma** – present from birth
- **Secondary glaucoma** – caused by other medical conditions or medications

2. What Causes Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is usually caused by **inefficient drainage** of fluid in the eye, which leads to pressure buildup. However, it can also be influenced by other factors:

- Family history
- Age (especially over 60)
- Diabetes or high blood pressure
- Previous eye trauma
- Prolonged steroid use
- Thin corneas or high myopia

Not everyone with high eye pressure develops glaucoma — and some people with normal pressure do. That's why **comprehensive testing** is essential.

3. What Are the Symptoms of Glaucoma?

In its early stages, **glaucoma often has no symptoms**. As it progresses, you may experience:

- Loss of peripheral (side) vision
- Blurred or tunnel vision
- Halos around lights

- Eye pain (especially with angle-closure glaucoma)
- Nausea or vomiting (in emergencies)

Because early symptoms are rare, **routine eye exams are critical** for detection — especially if you're over 60 or have other risk factors.

4. Can Glaucoma Be Cured?

There is currently **no cure for glaucoma**, but with early detection and proper treatment, it can be **successfully managed**.

The goal of treatment is to **lower eye pressure** and prevent further optic nerve damage. While any vision already lost can't be restored, timely treatment can help protect your remaining sight.

5. What Are the Treatment Options for Glaucoma?

Treatment depends on the type and severity of your glaucoma. Options include:

- **Prescription eye drops** to lower pressure
- **Laser therapy** like SLT or LPI to improve drainage
- **Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery (MIGS)**
- **Traditional surgery** like trabeculectomy or tube shunts

At **Vance Thompson Vision**, we offer the full spectrum of treatment options — and will personalize your plan based on your specific needs.

6. Will I Go Blind from Glaucoma?

If left untreated, glaucoma **can lead to permanent blindness**. However, with early diagnosis, consistent treatment, and regular follow-up, most patients maintain functional vision for life.

That's why it's so important to catch the disease early — and stay engaged in long-term care with a trusted specialist.

7. How Is Glaucoma Diagnosed?

A glaucoma evaluation includes several painless tests:

- **Tonometry** – measures eye pressure
- **Optical coherence tomography (OCT)** – images the optic nerve
- **Visual field test** – checks peripheral vision
- **Gonioscopy** – examines the eye's drainage angle
- **Pachymetry** – measures corneal thickness

We offer **advanced diagnostic technology** at our Sioux Falls office for early and accurate detection.

8. How Often Do I Need to Be Checked for Glaucoma?

That depends on your age and risk factors:

- **Age 40–54:** every 2–4 years
- **Age 55–64:** every 1–3 years
- **Age 65+:** every 1–2 years
- **High-risk individuals** (family history, diabetes, etc.): at least every year

If you already have glaucoma, your specialist will set a customized follow-up schedule based on your condition.

9. Is Glaucoma Painful?

Most types of glaucoma — especially **open-angle glaucoma** — are painless in early stages.

However, **acute angle-closure glaucoma** can cause:

- Sudden eye pain
- Redness
- Blurred vision

- Nausea or vomiting

This is a medical emergency and requires **immediate treatment** to avoid permanent vision loss.

10. What's the Difference Between Glaucoma and Cataracts?

- **Glaucoma** damages the **optic nerve** and causes **permanent** vision loss, usually starting with peripheral vision.
- **Cataracts** cloud the eye's natural lens and cause **reversible** vision problems that can be corrected with surgery.

It's possible to have both at the same time — and at **Vance Thompson Vision**, we often perform **combined cataract and glaucoma procedures** when needed.

11. How Much Does Glaucoma Treatment Cost?

Costs vary depending on:

- Type of treatment (drops, laser, surgery)
- Insurance coverage
- Follow-up and medication needs

Most insurance plans — including **Medicare and Medicaid** — cover glaucoma treatment as a medically necessary service. We provide upfront cost estimates and offer flexible financing options.

12. Can I Still Drive With Glaucoma?

It depends on how advanced your condition is. In early stages, most people continue driving safely. As peripheral vision declines, you may need more frequent testing or restrictions.

We'll help monitor your vision and guide you on how glaucoma might impact your driving and daily activities.

Why Choose Vance Thompson Vision for Glaucoma in Sioux Falls, SD?

- Glaucoma-trained ophthalmologists with years of experience

- Advanced imaging and diagnostic technology
- Full range of treatment options — from drops to surgery
- Personalized care and clear answers to your questions
- Local access with a national reputation for excellence

You deserve answers, support, and a trusted path forward — and that's exactly what we offer.

Call to Action: Get Your Glaucoma Questions Answered in Person

Still have questions? That's okay — we're here for that. Let's talk through your symptoms, risks, and concerns together. **Schedule your glaucoma consultation at Vance Thompson Vision in Sioux Falls, SD** and take the first step toward clarity, confidence, and long-term vision protection.

Company Description

Vance Thompson Vision Sioux Falls 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/sioux-falls/>

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

Google Folder: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/129vWvmuKZumgZWWNqFP2WICXAiPsmGB5?usp=drive_open

Recommended Resources

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