# RLE in Cedar Rapids: Vision Correction Beyond LASIK for Patients Over 45

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Refractive lens exchange, or RLE, is a vision correction procedure that removes the eye's natural lens and replaces it with an advanced artificial lens implant. For adults over 45 who have been told laser vision correction is not the right fit, it is frequently the answer to the question behind the question: not "am I too old for LASIK," but "what will actually correct the way my vision has changed?"

Age by itself is not what rules out LASIK. What changes after 40 is the natural lens inside the eye, which gradually loses its ability to shift focus between distance and near. That change is called presbyopia, and it is why reading glasses, bifocals, and progressives start appearing in the mid-40s. LASIK reshapes the cornea, the eye's front surface, and does not alter the lens sitting behind it. RLE works on the lens itself. For patients whose main frustration is near vision, or who have farsightedness, astigmatism, or prescriptions outside the laser range, replacing the lens addresses the structure actually causing the problem. Vance Thompson Vision ? Cedar Rapids offers refractive lens exchange alongside LASIK, cataract surgery, cornea care, and glaucoma treatment; the evaluation determines which fits.

RLE is most often confused with cataract surgery, understandably: the technique and the lens implants are

largely the same. The difference is timing. Cataract surgery removes a natural lens that has already clouded enough to interfere with vision. RLE removes a clear lens that has lost its focusing flexibility, before a cataract has developed. In both, the surgeon makes small incisions, removes the natural lens, and positions the implant. The outpatient procedure takes about 15 minutes per eye under numbing drops, and most patients return to regular activities within one to two days.

That sequence answers a question patients ask constantly: whether RLE means they will still face cataract surgery later. They will not, in the treated eye. A cataract is a clouding of the eye's own natural lens; once that lens has been removed and replaced with an implant, there is nothing left to cloud, so a cataract cannot form in that eye afterward. For patients in their late 40s and 50s who assume cataract surgery is somewhere in their future, this is often the deciding factor.

Which lens goes in is the decision that shapes the result, and several categories are available. Multifocal and trifocal implants use multiple focal points within one lens to support distance, intermediate, and near vision, suiting patients who want less dependence on glasses across daily tasks; the tradeoff to discuss beforehand is the possibility of halos, particularly at night. Extended depth of focus lenses, or EDOF, prioritize a continuous range weighted toward distance and intermediate vision ? useful for driving and computer work, with less glare risk than some multifocal designs, though many patients still use readers for fine print. The Light Adjustable Lens can be fine-tuned after the eye heals through a series of light treatments, refining the prescription based on how the patient is actually seeing. Toric designs are available across these categories to correct astigmatism.

Wilson performs these procedures at the Cedar Rapids practice, which has served patients at 1136 H Ave NE since 1996 and joined Vance Thompson Vision in 2024. She completed her residency at the University of Iowa Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences and a fellowship at Vance Thompson Vision in cataract, cornea, glaucoma, and refractive surgery. She is a recipient of the ASCRS Foundation Resident Excellence Award, a volunteer surgeon with the ASCRS Foundation's Operation Sight program, and an editorial contributor to EyeRounds. Patients reach the practice from Cedar Rapids, Marion, Iowa City, Waterloo, and Dubuque.

"Patients are often surprised to learn that refractive lens exchange and cataract surgery are the same operation performed at different points in time," said Caroline Wilson, MD, board-certified ophthalmologist, Vance Thompson Vision ? Cedar Rapids. "My fellowship training covered cataract, cornea, glaucoma, and refractive surgery, so I evaluate every patient across all of those options rather than starting from one procedure and working backward. The lens we choose matters as much as the surgery itself, and that decision should come from how someone actually uses their eyes day to day."

Vance Thompson Vision surgeons have performed more than 80,000 procedures and bring nearly 100 years of combined experience across the practice. Adults weighing vision correction after 45 can schedule an evaluation at the Cedar Rapids office or by calling (319) 362-9855. Candidacy is determined through a complete examination, results vary by individual, and no lens implant can promise complete freedom from glasses.

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For more information about Vance Thompson Vision - Cedar Rapids, contact the company here:Vance Thompson Vision - Cedar RapidsVance Thompson Vision(319) 362-9855info@vancethompsonvision.com1136 H Ave NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

## Vance Thompson Vision - Cedar Rapids

*Vance Thompson Vision are world leaders in quality vision correction and patient care in ophthalmology. We specialize in vision surgery and treatment with a specific focus on LASIK, refractive cataract surgery, glaucoma, cornea care, and oculoplastics.*

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