LASIK vs. EVO ICL: How Billings Patients Decide

November 17, 2026

Billings, MT - November 17, 2026 -
Patients who come to Vance Thompson Vision in Billings weighing LASIK against the EVO ICL open with the same question: which one is better? Neither one is. Both can reduce or eliminate dependence on glasses and contacts, but they correct vision in fundamentally different ways, and the right choice is determined by a patient's prescription, corneal structure, eye health, and vision goals rather than by preference.

The mechanical difference drives the decision. LASIK reshapes the cornea with a laser so light focuses more accurately on the retina. The EVO ICL takes the opposite approach: a thin, flexible lens is placed behind the iris and in front of the eye's natural lens, correcting vision without removing corneal tissue. The cornea stays intact, the natural lens stays in place, and the implanted lens is not visible to others. For patients whose corneal thickness or prescription makes laser correction less appropriate, that structural difference is what makes treatment possible at all.

That distinction also shapes who qualifies. EVO ICL is generally an option for adults ages 21 to 45 with nearsightedness, with or without astigmatism, who have healthy eyes and a prescription stable for at least one year. It is often considered for patients with higher levels of nearsightedness and for those already told they are not LASIK candidates; the EVO Toric ICL addresses eligible amounts of astigmatism as well. LASIK suits patients whose prescription, corneal thickness, and eye health fall within the range the laser can safely

treat. Which category a patient lands in is a matter of testing, not of choosing from a menu.

A question that comes up in nearly every Billings consultation is whether the implanted lens stays in the eye for good. It is designed to provide long-lasting vision correction, but it is not a one-way decision: a surgeon can remove or replace the lens if circumstances change, including if a patient later develops a cataract and requires cataract surgery. Because no corneal tissue is removed, the eye's natural anatomy is preserved, and for many patients, keeping future options open is the detail that settles the question.

"Patients sometimes arrive convinced they've already been disqualified from vision correction because someone told them they weren't a LASIK candidate," said Russell Swan, MD, board-certified ophthalmologist, Vance Thompson Vision ? Montana. "That's a conversation about one procedure, not about every option. Being able to offer LASIK, PRK, corneal cross-linking, and the EVO ICL means we can measure the eye first and then recommend what actually fits it. Sometimes the answer is a laser. Sometimes it's a lens. The measurements tell us which."

Dr. Swan leads Vance Thompson Vision's Billings and Bozeman locations. He completed his ophthalmology residency at the Moran Eye Center at the University of Utah and a fellowship in advanced anterior segment surgery at Vance Thompson Vision in Sioux Falls, and serves as adjunct assistant professor in the University of Utah Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. He received the 2018 MillennialEYE "One to Watch" Award, serves on the ASCRS Young Eye Surgeons Clinical Committee, leads annual surgical mission trips to Hospital San Felipe in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and is a principal investigator on FDA-monitored clinical trials.

The Billings practice at 1747 Poly Dr serves patients from Billings, Laurel, Hardin, Miles City, and Sheridan, Wyoming, with clinical exams and the surgery center under one roof. Same-day and back-to-back surgeries are available for those traveling in, a practical consideration in a region where patients commonly drive three or more hours for care.

Consultations include detailed testing and a recommendation based on the individual eye. Individual results vary, and every procedure carries potential risks a surgeon reviews with each patient beforehand.

###

For more information about Vance Thompson Vision - Billings, contact the company here:Vance Thompson Vision - BillingsVance Thompson Vision(406) 294-1994info@vancethompsonvision.com1747 Poly Dr, Billings, MT 59102

Vance Thompson Vision - Billings

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.

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

Email: info@vancethompsonvision.com

Phone: (406) 294-1994