SupportSight Foundation

Empowering Your Voice to Save Sight.

UNDERSTANDING STARGARDT DISEASE

Stargardt disease is a rare inherited eye condition causing gradual central vision loss, often starting in childhood. Knowing the condition and its outlook helps families face the future with confidence.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT STARGARDT DISEASE

What It Is: Stargardt is a genetic retinal disorder caused most commonly by mutations in the ABCA4 gene. These mutations lead to the buildup of toxic byproducts in the retina, damaging the macula over time and impairing sharp, central vision.

Who It Affects: Stargardt typically begins in people under 20, though later-onset cases can occur. Because it's inherited in an autosomal recessive pattern, both parents must carry the gene for a child to be affected.

Symptoms: The earliest signs may include difficulty reading, trouble adjusting to low light, or dark or blurry spots in central vision. Peripheral (side) vision usually remains intact, allowing individuals to adapt with support.

Diagnosis: Diagnosis may include a dilated eye exam, genetic testing, retinal imaging, and visual function tests. Early detection is key to managing progression and connecting with resources.

Current Research: Researchers are pursuing gene, stem cell, and drug therapies to slow or stop the disease. Groups like The Support Sight Foundation help bring these advances closer.

Living With Stargardt: Many people with Stargardt lead active, fulfilling lives. Orientation and mobility training, adaptive technology, and emotional support from low vision specialists can make a world of difference.