WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT
STARGARDT DISEASE

WHAT IS STARGARDT DISEASE?

**FACT:** Stargardt disease is the most common form of inherited macular degeneration.

Often diagnosed in childhood or adolescence, Stargardt disease is an inherited form of macular degeneration causing central vision loss. The condition is sometimes referred to as juvenile or early onset macular degeneration.

The progressive vision loss associated with Stargardt disease is caused by the degeneration of photoreceptor cells in the central portion of the retina called the macula.

**The retina** is the delicate light-sensing tissue lining the inside wall of the back of the eye.

**The macula**, which is rich in cone photoreceptors, is responsible for sharp central vision.

**Photoreceptor cells** in the retina convert light into electrical signals, which are sent to the brain.

**Cones** also provide vision in lighted settings and color perception.

**The retinal pigment epithelium (RPE)**, a layer of cells supporting photoreceptors, is also affected in people with Stargardt disease.

HOW IS STARGARDT DISEASE INHERITED?

Stargardt disease is inherited when both parents have one mutated copy of the *ABCA4* gene and a normal copy. The child has a 25% chance of inheriting the two copies of *ABCA4* (one from each parent) to cause the disease.

In a small percentage of cases, Stargardt disease is caused by mutations in the gene *ELOVL4*.

In these cases, the parent has the disease and has a 50% chance of passing it on to each child.

WHAT TO EXPECT WITH STARGARDT DISEASE:

**What someone with Stargardt disease may see.**

- A loss or change in central vision (progression variable).

- Decreased ability to distinguish details and shape.

- Characteristic yellowish flecks in the retinal pigment epithelium.

- Some peripheral vision is usually maintained.

The area of vision loss is called the scotoma.

To learn more about living with Stargardt disease, finding a retina specialist, genetic testing or clinical trials, visit FightingBlindness.org or call 888-332-3667.