

A Simple Guide To Vitiligo, Diagnosis, Treatment And Related Conditions (A Simple Guide to Medical Conditions)

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO VITILIGO, Diagnosis, Treatment And Related Conditions by

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Chapter 1 Vitiligo Many patients with vitiligo are fearful that they have a serious condition because of the change of the color of their skin. What is Vitiligo? Vitiligo is a medical skin disorder in which there is a loss of brown color (pigment) from areas of skin, leading to irregular white spots on the skin. Vitiligo is a skin disorder which presents as white spots or patches on the skin. A simple treatment is by camouflage with cosmetics. It is not contagious. What is the cause of Vitiligo? The cause of Vitiligo is not known. 1. Vitiligo appears to happen when immune cells destroy the cells that produce brown pigment (melanocytes). Many people with Vitiligo may have related auto immune diseases: 1. Addison disease 2. Hyperthyroidism 3. Pernicious anemia Autoimmune conditions are disorders where the bodys own cells attack its cells in this case the skin pigmented cells. There is a progressive disappearance of the pigment melanin that gives the skin color. The loss of melanin happens when the melanocytes (pigment cells) are damaged and melanin cannot be produced. The most likely cause is that it is one of the autoimmune disorders in which the body attacks and destroys its own tissues in this case the pigment producing cells. 2. It often occurs from a decrease or loss of the normal cells (melanocytes) that are responsible for the production of pigment (melanin) in the skin. If the melanocytes are unable to produce melanin, or if their number decreases, white, sharply-bordered patches of different shapes and sizes will develop on otherwise normal skin. Vitiligo can happen on any portion of the skin surface where pigment cells are present but more frequently involves the exposed parts the face, neck, and backs of the hands. In severe cases the loss of pigment can extend over the entire body. The hairs in these de-pigmented patches can also turn white. When the pigment returns, it returns first in

and around these hairs. 3. The condition appears to run in families. Most of the people affected are in good health. 4. Sometimes vitiligo occurs in association with such conditions as pernicious anemia, thyroid disease, diabetes, and disorders of the adrenal glands. 5. Sunburn or severe emotional stress. 6. Vitiligo is not a sign of cancer. 7. The cosmetic as well as the psychological effects are worse for those with darker skins because the condition is very obvious against a dark skin background. 8. Vitiligo is normally a progressive and relentless disease. Rarely do people with the condition regain their color spontaneously. Vitiligo may appear at any age. However, it begins before the age of 20 in about half of cases. There is a higher rate of the condition in some families. There is some genetic factor involved and vitiligo may occur in the family. About 1 in 5 affected people has some other family member who is also afflicted. It involves about 1% of the population and is more frequent among younger patients. 50% of people who form this disease suffer some pigment loss before the age of 20 yrs. Vitiligo is not infectious and a person cannot catch it from affected people. Men and women are equally affected. It is not more frequent in any racial or ethnic groups. What are the symptoms of Vitiligo? People with vitiligo are generally well. Vitiligo is not sore or itchy. The appearance of the skin can be distressing, if the face or the hands are affected. There is no natural protection from the sun in involved areas of skin. Skin affected by vitiligo burns much more easily than normal skin if exposed to sunlight. Appearances of Vitiligo are: 1. White spots or patches on the skin 2. The hair in the vitiligo patch may be white in color.

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