

Vitiligo

A condition causing the formation of white or pale patches of skin due to destruction of Melanocytes

Vitiligo

- Cause unknown
- Disease prevents formation of melanin
- May occur at any age
- Peak age of onset 20-30 years
- May affect small, specific areas or become widespread and disseminated

Areas Affected

- Face
- Neck
- Axillae
- Groin
- Hands
- Knees

Vitiligo



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- Pigment loss may occur over a period of a few months before stabilising and remaining unchanged for a long period
- Episodes of pigment loss may the occur later in the disease
- Vitiligo affects 1% of the population

Vitiligo



Factors affecting the development of Vitiligo

- Family History. 30% of sufferers report a family history.
- Exposure to chemicals such as Phenol (Disinfectant)
- Emotional or Physical Stress
- Autoimmune destruction of melanocytes
- Skin Injury
- Burns
- Inflammatory Skin Disorders

Symptoms

- White skin patches, which may affected both sides of the body simultaneously
- White hairs within depigmented areas



Diagnosis

- Usually made upon the clinical evidence of the depigmented skin patches
- Other tests may be required to eliminate underlying disease such as Diabetes, Pernicious anaemia, Hyper- & Hypothyroidism and Addison's disease
- Skin Biopsy may be required

Treatment

- The type of treatment initiated often depends upon the severity of the condition
- In some cases, no direct treatment is required.
- Patients may be encouraged to avoid sun tanning to make the patches less noticeable
- Use of high factor sun tan lotion
- Use of cosmetic cover-up solutions

Treatment

- Repigmentation can be achieved either with repigmentation therapy or the use of corticosteroids.
- Repigmentation therapy involves using new melanocytes from the base of hair follicles, or from the edge of the depigmented patch.
- The patient is also given a drug called Psoralen. When exposed to UV light, this drug stimulates repigmentation

Treatment

- This type of therapy is called PUVA therapy.
- Psoralen can also be applied topically to less widespread patches
- Topical corticosteroids may also be used in mild cases.
- Depigmentation may be used in patients with severe vitiligo. This process uses a bleaching agent to change the colour of the pigmented skin to that of the Vitiligo patches