

Do you or somebody you know have Vitiligo?

Below is a brief study on Vitiligo for your review.

What Is Vitiligo?

Vitiligo is a disorder in which white patches of skin appear on different parts of the body. The hair that grows in areas affected by Vitiligo usually turns white. This happens because the cells that make pigment (color) in the skin are destroyed. The cause of Vitiligo is not known, but doctors and researchers have several different theories.

One theory is that people develop antibodies that destroy the melanocytes in their own bodies causing Vitiligo. Another theory is that melanocytes destroy themselves causing Vitiligo. Finally, some people have reported that a single event such as sunburn or emotional distress triggered Vitiligo; however, these events have not been scientifically proven to cause Vitiligo.

Who Is Affected by Vitiligo?

About 1 to 2 percent of the world's population, or 40 to 50 million people, have Vitiligo. In the United States, 2 to 5 million people have the disorder. Ninety-five percent of people who have Vitiligo develop it before their 40th birthday. The disorder affects all races and both sexes equally.

People with certain autoimmune diseases (such as thyroid disease) are more likely to get Vitiligo than people who don't have any autoimmune diseases. Scientists do not know why Vitiligo is connected with these diseases. However, most people with Vitiligo have no other autoimmune disease. Vitiligo may also run in families.

What Causes Vitiligo?

The cause is not known. Vitiligo may be an autoimmune disease. These diseases happen when your immune system mistakenly attacks some part of your own body. In Vitiligo, the immune system may destroy the melanocytes in the skin. It is also possible that one or more genes may make a person more likely to get the disorder.

What Are the Symptoms of Vitiligo?

Vitiligo generally appears in one of three patterns. White patches on the skin are the main sign of Vitiligo. These patches are more common in areas where the skin is exposed to the sun. The patches may be on the hands, feet, arms, face, and lips. For most people who have Vitiligo, depigmentation occurs on different parts of the body (generalized pattern). In addition to white patches on the skin, people with Vitiligo may have premature graying of the scalp hair, eyelashes, eyebrows, and beard.

There is no way to predict if Vitiligo will spread. This is usually a progressive disorder and over time the white patches will spread to other areas of the body. Vitiligo spreads slowly, over many years for some people and for others spreading of Vitiligo occurs rapidly.

How Do They Diagnose Vitiligo?

The doctor will usually ask person about their medical history to determine a family history of Vitiligo; a rash, sunburn, or other skin trauma at the site of Vitiligo. Do you or your family have autoimmune diseases or are you sensitive to the sun, will be a couple of questions to determine Vitiligo. A series of possible tests will be determined by the doctor to detect Vitiligo.

Coping With The Emotions of Having Vitiligo

If Vitiligo appears on visible areas, people may have a hard time coping in public due to the appearance caused by Vitiligo. Those with Vitiligo disorder may experience emotional stress, particularly if Vitiligo develops on the face, hands, arms or feet. Widespread Vitiligo on children would be especially emotional. Some who have Vitiligo feel depressed, ashamed, embarrassed and concerned about how others will react to their Vitiligo.

It is important to find a doctor who is knowledgeable about Vitiligo. As a Vitiligo patient, you should learn as much as Vitiligo as you can to determine your treatment choices. There are many avenues to coping with Vitiligo. Seek a support group or family and friends to help cope with Vitiligo. There are many treatment options for Vitiligo, including medical, surgical, and other therapies. Vitiligo cosmetics that cover the white patches help those with Vitiligo feel better about themselves while going through Vitiligo treatment. Judith August Cosmetics has provided concealer products for Vitiligo and other skin disorders since the early 80's.

What Research Is Being Done on Vitiligo?

The University of Colorado has a project involving families with Vitiligo in the United States and the United Kingdom. Doctors and researchers continue to look for the causes of and new treatments for Vitiligo. For more on Vitiligo, search through your web browser for Vitiligo research, Vitiligo treatment, Vitiligo information, and Vitiligo options. You will find an exhaustive amount of information on Vitiligo from a variety of sources. Learn as much as you can about Vitiligo now. Vitiligosupport.org is one of the most helpful resources regarding Vitiligo.