

VITILIGO

Vitiligo is a skin condition where there is a loss of pigment in certain areas of the skin. The areas that lose pigment appear white especially when compared to the normal skin. The darker your normal skin is, the more apparent the vitiligo is. Vitiligo can affect very small areas of the body or can involve large areas. Among the more common areas involved are the face, hands, feet and private area.

The exact cause of the vitiligo is unknown. It seems that there is a autoimmune reaction in the body. This means that your own body destroys the pigment cells for an unclear reason. In most cases the only problem is the vitiligo and is not an indication of an internal problem or other more serious illness.

There are many approaches to treat vitiligo. The first approach would be to do nothing at all especially if the areas involved are not visible.

One of the most important parts of treatment of vitiligo is to prevent the normal skin from tanning by using sunscreens. In most fair skinned patients in the winter, the vitiligo is not apparent. This is because the normal skin is not tanned. Vitiligo seems to come out in the summer because the normal skin is getting darker and the contrast is increased. In addition the vitiligo skin is prone to develop sunburns quite easily. For this reason, it is very important to apply a high SPF sunscreen daily to prevent the burning in the vitiligo skin and to prevent the tanning in the normal skin.

Another treatment for vitiligo is to use a special type of make-up that can blend the vitiligo skin with the normal skin. I will show you an example of this type of make-up and tell you where it can be obtained if necessary .

The most effective treatment for vitiligo is outpatient narrow band UVB phototherapy. The actual treatment is done in a physician's prescription phototherapy unit to control the dosage. It is a major commitment in terms of time and is usually done only if the vitiligo is widespread or very distressing. If this is a consideration I will explain it to you in greater detail.

In most cases, there are ways of making this condition less of a problem on a day to day basis. If you do have any other questions, please do not hesitate to ask.