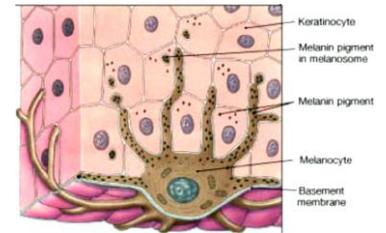


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VITILIGO

Vitiligo is a skin condition where the pigment producing cells (melanocytes) have stopped working in specific areas of the skin. This results in sections that lack pigment (melanin) and appear to be white.

Absence of Skin Color

Without the production of melanin, areas are white, no matter what the overall color has been. Vitiligo can be localized to one spot, distributed to several parts of the body, or found everywhere, which is uncommon. Vitiligo often appears first



First Appearance of Vitiligo

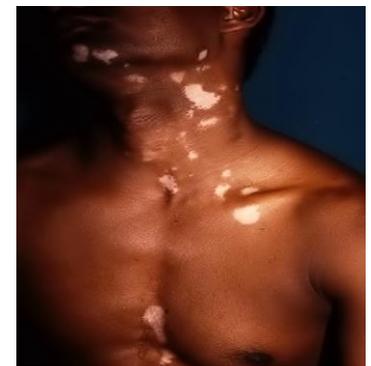
on the genitalia or the chest. Additional hypopigmented areas can then be found anywhere on the body. The vitiliginous areas may have sharp borders, but the skin is normal otherwise. The hair where vitiligo has developed will be white. A localized form may occur in a mole (nevus)



Halo Nevus of Sutton

Other Types of Pigment Changes

Not all color changes indicate vitiligo. For example, the very common fungal infection, tinea versicolor, has white, red, and / or brown areas with scale. Pityriasis alba, white scaling areas often on the face, is found in children with atopic dermatitis. Skin that has been injured by a chemical or burn can be without pigment, as in post-inflammatory hypopigmentation. There is also a complete absence of melanocytes found in patients who are albino.



More Extensive Areas without Pigment
Cause

Vitiligo is an immunologic condition, where the melanocytes have stopped producing pigment. Under the microscope, these pigment cells appear unchanged.

Treatment

Because there is no one treatment that is 100% effective, there are many approaches. Making the skin sensitive to artificial light (PUVA) or to sunlight with psoralens by mouth or on the skin is the most effective. Topical steroids or agents like Elidel® or Protopic® will stimulate the melanocytes to produce pigment. Small skin grafts may also stimulate repigmentation. The vitiligo process may even stop on its own.

