



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Vitiligo

Vitiligo is a long-term condition where pale white patches develop on the skin. This guide is to help you talk to your doctor about everything you need to know. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Melanin	Vitiligo is caused by a lack of melanin, the pigment in the skin.
Non-segmental vitiligo	In this type of vitiligo, the white patches often appear symmetrically on both sides of the body. This is the most common type of vitiligo and it is sometimes called bilateral or generalized vitiligo.
Segmental vitiligo	Sometimes called unilateral or localized vitiligo, this type of vitiligo causes the white patches to affect only one area of the body.
Autoimmune condition	Non-segmental vitiligo is thought to be an autoimmune condition. In autoimmune disorders, your immune system attacks your body's healthy cells and tissue. In this case, the immune system destroys the melanocyte skin cells that make melanin.
Neurochemicals	Segmental vitiligo is thought to be caused by neurochemicals. These chemicals are released from the nerve endings in your skin and are poisonous to the melanocyte skin cells.
Trigger	An event or interaction that causes vitiligo. For example, it is thought that skin damage, stressful events, or exposure to specific chemicals can lead to vitiligo.
Phototherapy / Light therapy	This is a vitiligo treatment where specific types of light are used to restore color to the skin.
Corticosteroid	Topical medical creams can be prescribed to restore color to the skin. The most common type of cream prescribed is a corticosteroid cream. This is a type of steroid medicine applied directly to the skin.
Depigmentation	This is an uncommon treatment that removes the remaining color from the skin, leaving the person with completely white skin.



Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your vitiligo.

About Symptoms

- Will my vitiligo symptoms get worse?
- Other than white patches on the skin, are there other symptoms associated with vitiligo?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- Is vitiligo associated with any other diseases?
- What are common vitiligo triggers?

About Diagnosis

- Is there a cure for vitiligo?
- Is vitiligo hereditary?

About Treatment

- I have heard of various types of light therapy, such as phototherapy, PUVA light therapy. Can you tell me the differences, please?
- How long does light therapy take? How many sessions will I need?
- Are there new treatment options being offered? Can you tell me about current vitiligo research?
- Are there side effects to corticosteroid cream that I need to be aware of?

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About Coping

- Are there any local vitiligo support groups?

- I'm struggling to cope with vitiligo. Can I access counseling?

- Can you advise me of ways to manage my stress levels since stress can be a vitiligo trigger?

About Living with vitiligo

- Am I at greater risk of sunburn?

- Will skincare products make my vitiligo worse?

- Do I need to wear sunscreen?

- Am I at greater risk of skin cancer?
