

# What is Leucoderma? Causes, Symptoms & Treatment of Leucoderma

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**Leucoderma** or white skin, is the name given to a skin disease, wherein there is a gradual loss of the pigment, melanin, from the skin layers, resulting in the appearance of white patches. **Leucoderma** is a condition in which the skin layers experience loss of skin-pigment. Also known as **vitiligo**, leucoderma causes white patches on the skin surface. It is more common in women than in men and is mostly seen on the hands, neck, back and wrist. Though the disease does not cause any organic harm, the patches surely look ugly and upsetting. Known as vitiligo, leucoderma can affect people of any age and sex and can be seen on any kind of skin. Contrary to the popular belief, the disease is neither infectious nor contagious and is not caused due to any germs or bad blood.

The main **causes for leucoderma** are excessive mental worry and chronic or acute gastric disorders. Other causes involve impaired hepatic function such as jaundice, worms or other parasites in the alimentary canal, typhoid, a defective perspiratory mechanism and burn injuries. It can also be the result of hereditary reasons.

Leucoderma, also known as vitiligo, is a distressing skin condition. The word literally means **white skin**. There is a gradual loss of the pigment melanin from the skin layers which results in white patches. These patches look ugly, especially in persons with a dark complexion. The condition does not cause any organic harm. This disease is caused neither by any germs, nor is it due to bad blood. It is considered to be neither infectious nor contagious.

Vitiligo is a widespread disorder now a days. Generally it happens due to autoimmunity which is the most known reason. Depigmentation of skin happens first which acquires skin area in shape of a spot or patch forming vitiligo spots. No one can predict its spreading without medicines. Some person holds one patch for whole life and another person can suffer vast spreading. This all depends on how far a person's immunity is affected as per our studies. Facial vitiligo is a very bad situation in the life of a vitiligo patient. As the face gets a white spot it almost disturbs the psychosomatic state of the person's mind. One can feel embarrassed and get into deep depression after onset of facial vitiligo.

## Leucoderma Symptoms

The problem usually starts with a small white spot which later develops into patches. These patches are pale in the beginning, but become whiter and whiter as time passes by due to loss of pigment. As the spots enlarge, they merge into each other and, in course of time, form a very broad patch. In some cases, most of the skin of the body may be covered with white patches.

## **Leucoderma Causes**

The causes of leucoderma are still not completely understood. Despite advanced research, medicine is still trying to figure out the exact cause of Leucoderma. There are numerous theories as to what could cause this disease, of which three have been widely accepted.

The first theory is one of mistaken identity. The immune system mistakes the **pigment cells** for foreign bodies and destroys them. The second theory states that certain chemical agents destroy the pigment generating cells, while the third theory states that the cells are destroyed due to chemical exposure.

Whatever the cause, the course of the disease is certain - and that is the destruction of pigment cells. Some other causes of leucoderma are said to be excessive mental worry, chronic or acute gastric disorders, impaired hepatic function such as jaundice, worms or other parasites in the alimentary canal, typhoid, a defective perspiratory mechanism, and burn injuries.

## **How is it confirmed whether a white patch is Leucoderma?**

The white patch will in all probability be Leucoderma if it:

- Has an outline darker than the skin.
- Is irregular in appearance.
- Gradually increases in size.
- Appears milky white under an ultraviolet light.

## **What is the treatment for leucoderma?**

There is no cure for Leucoderma, and any doctor promising a cure is sure to be a quack! At the most, the patches can be coloured to match the skin, but this will not stop new patches from occurring.

## **Home Remedies for Leucoderma Treatment**

Leucoderma may also be treated using certain home remedies, some of which have been mentioned below.

1. Turmeric mixed with mustard oil has also proved useful in leucoderma. About 500 gm of turmeric should be pounded and soaked in 8 litres of water at night. It should be boiled in the morning till only one litre of water is left, and then be strained and mixed with 500 ml of mustard oil. This mixture should be heated till only the oil is left. It should then be strained and preserved in a bottle. The mixture should be applied on the white patches every morning and evening for 2-3 months.
2. Take about 25 grams of radish seeds and ground them into a powdery substance. Add 2 tsp vinegar and make a fine paste. Apply this paste on the affected area and wash off when dry.
3. Soak psoralea seeds in ginger juice for 3 days. Thereafter, dry them and grind to make a fine powder. Have 1 gram of this powder, with a glass of milk, for about a month. You can also apply this powder on white patches.
4. Another method would be to soak psoralea and tamarind seeds in water for 3-4 days. Dry them well and grind to form a paste. Apply this paste on the affected area on a daily basis.
5. Goosefoot vegetable is effective in treating leucoderma. Apply the juice of this vegetable on the affected area, once a day. Continue it for 2 months.
6. Mix red clay and ginger in equal parts. Apply this on the affected area and wash off when dry.
7. Fill a copper vessel with drinking water and leave it overnight. Have this water, on an empty stomach, every morning. This is effective in healing leucoderma.
8. Combine 100 gm each of alfalfa and cucumber juice. Consume this mixture two times a day i.e. in the morning and evening. This is a useful home remedy for treating leucoderma.
9. Take a handful of dry pomegranate leaves and grind them into a fine powder. Have about 8 grams of this powder every morning and evening, with a glass of water.
10. Neem is very effective in treating leucoderma. Try to drink a glass of neem juice everyday.
11. Grind black gram and add water, to form a paste. Apply this paste on the affected area, washing off after it dries, for about 4 to 5 months. It is an effective remedy for treating leucoderma.
12. Holy basil leaves prove to be beneficial in treating white patches. Consume raw basil leaves or make a decoction out of Holy basil's leaves and stem, along with water.

13. Make a poultice of ginger leaves and apply it on the white patches. It is quite effective in treating leucoderma.
14. Increase the consumption of walnuts and figs. While walnuts purify blood, figs have healing properties to cure leucoderma.

### **Restricted Foods in Leucoderma**

It is recommended that a person affected with leucoderma (vitiligo) should avoid consuming highly antigenic material like fish, meat and eggs.

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