

## Shweta Association (Vitiligo Self Help Support Group)

Vitiligo or Leucoderma is not a disease per se. Melanocytes or cells producing melanin pigment sometimes gradually decrease in number leading to white patches on the skin. This depigmentation of the skin does not affect other organs of the body. Cosmetic disfigurement and fear of hereditary transmission has attached undue importance and social stigma to this disorder.

Vitiligo is found all over the world and is seen in about 1 to 3% of the population. In approximately 15 to 20% people it can be transmitted to future generations. Vitiligo is not a contagious disease and it does not affect physical and mental capability of a person in any manner. Many people having Vitiligo have gained prominence & recognition in various fields of life.

Diseases like Diabetes, High blood pressure, heart attack, cancer etc. are also familial, cause disability to certain extent and involve many vital organs in the body. But there is no social stigma attached with these diseases. Social stigma attached with diseases like Leprosy, tuberculosis, etc. has been eradicated to a great extent as a result of social awareness campaigns and health education programs.

Cosmetic disfigurement leads to lot of emotional problems, depression, family disputes in Vitiligo people. They need emotional support and counselling by the people sailing in the same boat. The aim of this Association is to bring them together, to form a common platform, to discuss their problems, exchange views, to learn scientific facts about the disorder and above all to change the self-image of the affected person positively.

Shweta has produced a feature film on Vitiligo, "Nital - Crystal Clear" directed by Sumitra Bhawe - Sunil Sukthankar. It is a first feature film in the world on the subject of Vitiligo. It has won many awards as Best feature film 2006 and was screened in all Film Festivals of India.

Shweta Association works to achieve the aims stated above. A lot of people such as social workers, skin specialists, psychiatrists, pathologists, ophthalmologists, genetic counsellors, beauticians etc. are actively involved in this Association. People suffering from this problem should come forward and join us. We hereby appeal to all the people who want to work for this cause to come forward and help us.

## Some Dos & Don'ts

- 1) Avoid going in bright sunlight. Whenever necessary wear cotton clothes that will cover maximum portion of the body. Don't wear synthetic clothes which do not absorb perspiration. Apply sun screen lotion on face, hands and other exposed parts of the body. Wear good quality sunglasses with ultra violet rays protection. Do not wear damp clothes. Avoid wearing tight clothing around the waist.
- 2) Avoid using cosmetics that are likely to cause allergy e.g. hair dye, perfumes, eye liner, lipstick etc. If at all cosmetics are to be used buy those of reputed company and test them before use.
- 3) Eat fresh food, plenty of leafy vegetable, fruits and salads. Avoid Junk food, Bakery Products, Processed and Tinned food, Cold drinks, Dalda. Drink plenty of water.
- 4) Care should be taken to prevent injuries, abrasions, burns to skin in day to day life while playing, cooking, gardening, burning crackers etc.
- 5) Avoid use of articles made from rubber, plastic like slippers, wrist watch straps, purses etc.
- 6) Mental stress is related to rapid spread of the ailment and poor response to the treatment. Yoga, meditation, music, reading, sports etc. should be practised regularly to maintain good mental health.

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### Facilities available

- 1) Counselling
- 2) Marriage Bureau
- 3) Employment Bureau
- 4) Cosmetic camouflage, Sunscreen Protection

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### For Contact :

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