

Psoralen in Foods & Vitiligo Diet

When foods containing psoralen are consumed or comes in contact with the skin (during food preparation), it causes increased tanning of the skin due to a photo-chemical reaction with UV light. Increase in sensitivity to UV light due to psoralen can lead to skin burns and rashes such as phyto-photo-dermatitis.

Foods/herbs that contain Psoralens:

- Celery, Cilantro, Dill, Coriander, Carrot, Turnip, Parsley, Parsnip, Fennel
- Lime, Lemon, Orange, Grapefruit, and other citrus fruits
- Citrus Chinese Herbs: QingPi, ChenPi, JuHong, ZhiShi, ZhiKe, FoShou

Patients with vitiligo have little or no melanin to protect their skin in their vitiligo patches, therefore avoidance of these foods by way of eating and food contact during preparation is recommended to reduce the chance of sun damage/burn/melanoma to the white skin regions.

Patients should increase consumption of foods high in tyrosine (a building block for skin pigmentation). Seaweed, egg white, soy protein (tofu, soymilk, soybeans etc), all beans (e.g. lentils), chicken, turkey, duck, quail and fish.

Eastern Medicine suggest vitiligo patients should reduce consumption of foods high in vitamin C such as oranges, hawthorne (ShanZha), peaches, tomato, chili pepper and chives because these foods disrupt with the formation of you skin's pigment (melanin). It recommends sesame, walnut, animal liver or kidney, eggplant, black shelf mushroom (黑木耳).

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