

Questions & Answers about Children with Albinism (Albinos)

Brought to you by Every Child Ministries

A Christian NGO bringing hope to “the forgotten children of Africa”

Because CHILDREN are any nation’s greatest resource—

A precious treasure from God!

What is albinism?

Albinism is a set of inherited conditions or certain recessive traits. Those conditions include lack of pigment or melanin in the skin, hair and eyes, making their skin and eyes extremely sensitive to light, and poor eyesight.

Is albinism a disease?

No, it is not a disease and is not caused or carried by germs or viruses. The child is not sick. He did not “catch” albinism as one might “catch” an infectious disease, and he cannot transmit albinism to anyone else through contact. Since albinism is not an illness, it is perfectly safe to touch albinos just as you would anyone else.

Is it safe to buy food from an albino or to eat food prepared by one?

Yes, absolutely. The albino is not sick. No germs or viruses or parasites of any kind are involved in albinism. Albinism is simply a set of inherited characteristics.

Is albinism a curse?

No, it is not a curse, nor is it the result of a curse. Albinism is simply a certain set of genetic or inherited conditions. The Bible declares that all children are a blessing from God and a reward to families. The albino child can develop normally and can bring great blessing both to the family and to the wider community and the world.

Does it bring a curse if a woman who is pregnant looks at an albino?

No. Looking at another person cannot affect the growth of her child in the womb.

Is it a shame to have an albino child?

No. An albino child looks different from others, but the birth of an albino child implies nothing shameful on the part of the parents. A child is always a blessing.

Do albinos have special curative or magical powers?

No, albinos are simply people like others. Having sex with an albino does not cure anything, and body parts of albinos have no special powers. Practitioners of magic just like to make money by deceiving the public, telling them these lies. In 2007, witch doctors in Tanzania discovered they could make money out of this lie. This led to the murder of many albinos, but no one was cured.

In Zimbabwe some people think that having sex with an albino will cure AIDS. There is not one shred of truth in this belief. Albino women suffer from being raped and from contracting AIDS from these men.

Are albinos mentally retarded or handicapped?

No, albinos are not mentally deficient in any way. They have a normal range of intelligence just like others and can be very smart. If they seem slow, parents should first check for vision problems. They may not be able to see the blackboard in class, or see to read well, and this could impede learning. Often children with albinism have difficulty distinguishing fine details. This can impair their ability in reading and math, but where vision help is available, albinos can do well at these subjects and all others as well.

If these suggestions don't seem to help an albino's eyesight, what can he do?

He can be checked by a doctor who specializes in eyesight. Sometimes different kinds of glasses can help, but they can't be just any glasses. They have to be made for the person's eyes. Some albinos can use hand-held magnifiers for reading. Some albinos are blind or almost blind. They can learn to read Braille and live as blind people. For people with albinism, increasing the size of something doesn't always help him to see it better. Increasing the contrast in text is often more effective—for instance, using a pure black marker on a bright white paper, or using a very black chalkboard instead of a green one.

Do the sunglasses need to be specially made for the albino's eyes?

Ordinary sunglasses can help many albinos by protecting their sensitive eyes from the damaging rays of the sun. Of course, they do not improve vision, but they are very useful in protecting the eyes so that bright sunlight does not cause further damage. They also give a great sense of relief, since bright sunlight is extremely painful to the eyes of an albino.

How long can an albino live?

An albino can live a normal life span, providing he does not get cancer from exposing his unprotected skin to the sun's rays. There is one particular type of albinism called Hermansky-Pudlak syndrome, however, which is often accompanied by a bleeding disorder which can affect the lungs and bowels and can lead to shortened lifespan. Many albinos can live a normal lifespan, however. Albinism by itself does not cause death.

Can albinos get married and have children?

Yes, albinos are normal sexually. They are capable of reproducing and are capable of caring for a home and a family. They only need special protection from the sun.

What will become of an albino? What kind of life can there be for them?

Albinos have achieved success in many areas of life. One of the emperors of Japan was an albino. Several famous actors, comedians, and musicians have been albinos, fashion models, international businessmen, educators and others. Their success depends on their individual drive and the support of their families and communities. Because of their sensitivity to the sun, indoor work is preferred for children with albinism.

Who is affected more, boys or girls?

Both are affected equally.

Is albinism only present in Africa?

Albinism is present in every population on earth, but it is more prevalent in Africa and certainly more noticeable amongst populations of dark color. It is also more serious in Africa because so much of African life involves work in the sun.

If parents have one albino child, will all their children be albino?

Not necessarily. If both parents carry the recessive gene for albinism, there is a one-in-four chance that their child will have albinism.

Does God really care about albinos?

God cares about all His creation. The Bible says that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's knowledge. Jesus said that even the flowers of the field are in His care (Matthew 6:26 & 28). God loves each person regardless of any conditions or even disabilities they may have. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

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