



UNDER THE  
SAME SUN

# MYTHS VS. TRUTHS OF ALBINISM

## MYTH

A charm or potion made from the body parts of a person with albinism, has magical powers – bringing its owner wealth, success and good luck.

## TRUTH

No one has ever become rich, successful or lucky from the use of body parts from a person with albinism. It comes from working hard.

## MYTH

People with albinism have normal vision.

## TRUTH

All people with albinism are visually impaired AND have extreme sensitivity to light (due to the lack of MELANIN). When outdoors, they need to wear sunglasses to protect their eyes from the sun. They usually require special glasses or magnifiers in order to read. Additionally they do not have special night vision.

## MYTH

It's the mother's "fault" if a child has albinism.

## TRUTH

Both the mother and the father must carry the albinism gene in order for their child to have albinism.

## MYTH

People with albinism come from and live only in Africa.

## TRUTH

Albinism occurs in people of every race and nationality on planet Earth.

## MYTH

Having sex with a woman with albinism will cure AIDS.

## TRUTH

No one has ever been cured of AIDS by having sex with a woman with albinism. All this does is spread the AIDS virus.

## MYTH

People with albinism never die. They are not human – they are ghosts.

## TRUTH

The on-going killings in Africa demonstrate that people with albinism definitely do die. They are NOT ghosts. Their pale skin and hair is due to a genetic condition which results in having little or no skin pigment called MELANIN.

## MYTH

Albinism is a curse from the gods or from dead ancestors. As a result, being in contact with a person with albinism will bring bad luck, sickness or even death.

## TRUTH

Albinism is nothing more, or less, than a genetic condition of the human body. As such, there is nothing magical or supernatural about it. You cannot "catch" albinism – it is not a disease and it is not contagious.

# What is ALBINISM?

Albinism is a rare, non-contagious, genetically inherited condition occurring in both genders regardless of ethnicity, in all countries of the world. BOTH the father and mother must carry the gene for it to be passed on even if they do not have albinism themselves.

The condition results in a lack of pigmentation in the hair, skin and eyes, causing vulnerability to sun exposure and bright light. Almost all people with albinism are visually impaired, with the majority being classified as “legally blind”. While numbers vary, in North America and Europe it is estimated that 1 in every 20,000 people have some form of albinism. In Tanzania, and throughout East Africa, albinism is much more prevalent, with estimates of 1 in 1,400 people being affected. The term “person with albinism” is preferred to the term “albino”.

## ALBINISM and the sun

People with albinism have little or no skin pigment called MELANIN. As a result, they also have very little natural protection against then sun’s rays. In places like Africa, where the hot tropical sun beats down mercilessly, less than 10% will live to age 30 and less than 2% will celebrate their 40th birthday due to skin cancer. Any person with albinism should avoid unprotected sun exposure at all times by wearing wide-brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts & pants and by applying high SPF sunscreen to exposed skin. Taking these steps may dramatically reduce the occurrence of skin cancer.

**“I have a dream that one day in Africa, people with albinism will take their rightful place throughout every level of society, and that the days of discrimination against persons with albinism will be a faint memory!”**

- Peter Ash, Founder, Under The Same Sun



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