

# Albinism



## Description

Albinism is a congenital deficiency of pigmentation in eyes, hair and skin.

Albinism results from the body's inability to produce normal amounts of the pigment melanin.

Oculocutaneous albinism is the most common form of the condition and affects skin, eyes and hair.

Ocular albinism is the second most common form of the condition and results in the lack of pigment only affecting the eyes; hair and skin are not affected.

## Implications

In all forms of Albinism, visual acuity is reduced, depth perception is reduced (or absent), and photophobia (sensitivity to light) is present.

There is decreased clarity in vision due to lack of pigment in the iris and choroid.

The fovea (area of retina responsible for seeing fine details) is underdeveloped, resulting in a lack of sharp vision.

Refractive errors such as myopia (short sightedness), hyperopia (long sightedness) or astigmatism can be associated with the condition. Glasses usually provide some correction for refractive errors.

Nystagmus (involuntary eye movement) and strabismus (squint or turned eye) are common accompanying conditions.

Some improvements in vision are expected in the first seven years of life as pigmentation in the body increases.

## Accessing the curriculum

Consider enlarging print.

Reduce classroom environmental glare. Avoid whiteboards, reflective white paper (buff may provide better access), and instruction next to windows.

Seat the student at the front of the class to ensure they have the best possible view of the teaching focus.

Consider the provision of dark lined paper. Ensure strong contrast.

Use additional verbal descriptions to support instruction and understanding.

Control overhead lighting to increase comfort and reduce visual fatigue caused by glare.

Encourage the student to wear sunglasses, hat and sunscreen to reduce glare and prevent sunburn when outdoors.

Modify physical activities and provide detailed verbal instructions of all actions, skills and game rules (where necessary).

Click to see an [Interactive Eye Diagram](#) (web link)

**As this document contains generic information, please consult with the Vision Education Program in regard to individual educational needs.**

## References

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