

# ALS Quick Facts

## ALS is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis

A – Absence  
Myo – Muscle  
Trophic – Nourishment  
Lateral – Side (referring to the spine)  
Sclerosis – Hardening or scarring

The word 'lateral' identifies the area where nerve cells in the spinal cord that nourish the muscles are located. As nerve cells die, the muscles receive no nourishment and waste away. Sclerosis occurs as the area affected deteriorates.

## ALS may also be called

- Lou Gehrig's disease
- MND (Motor Neuron Disease)
- SLA (Sclérose Latérale Amyotrophique)
- Maladie de Charcot

## ALS is a rapidly progressive neurodegenerative disease

- Motor nerve cells die.
- Voluntary muscles degenerate.
- The senses are unimpaired.
- The intellect may remain unaffected.
- The cause of ALS is unknown.
- ALS is not contagious.

## Some cases may be hereditary

- Less than ten per cent are familial ALS

## June is ALS Awareness Month

The ALS Society of Alberta works to raise awareness of ALS and to raise funds for research and support services. Please buy a cornflower in June to support those who suffer from this devastating disease.

## ALS is a fatal disease with no effective treatment or cure

- Eighty per cent of people with ALS die within two to five years of diagnosis.
- Some people die within a few months.
- Ten per cent of those affected may live 10 years or longer.

## ALS can strike anyone

- The incidence rate (number of new diagnoses) of ALS is estimated to be 2/100,000 people per year.
- Less than 10 per cent of cases of ALS are hereditary.
- ALS can strike both men and women.
- ALS affects all ethnic and socio-economic groups.
- ALS can strike young or very elderly adults but is most commonly diagnosed in middle and late adulthood.

## ALS is the most common cause of neurological death in Canada

- The mortality rate for ALS is approximately 2/100,000 per year.
- Approximately 2,500-3,000 Canadians over 18 currently live with ALS.

## ALS affects the whole family

- People with ALS require costly equipment and care.
- Ninety per cent of the burden of care is shouldered by family members.
- ALS is a drain on the physical, emotional and financial resources of caregivers.

## The ALS Society of Alberta

- Funds research for a cure
- Provides information to build awareness

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