

# ALS QUICK FACTS

FACT SHEET | AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS SOCIETY OF CANADA | SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE LA SCLÉROSE LATÉRALE AMYOTROPHIQUE

## 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 NEUROMUSCULAR DISEASE

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

## SOME CASES ARE HEREDITARY

- Less than 10 per cent are familial ALS

## ALS IS A FATAL DISEASE WITH NO EFFECTIVE TREATMENT AND NO 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 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 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 AFFECTS THE WHOLE FAMILY

- People with ALS require costly equipment and care
- Eighty 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 CANADA

- Supports Canadians living with ALS in Ontario
- Invests in research to make ALS a treatable, not terminal disease

## NINE PROVINCIAL ALS SOCIETIES

- Provide care and assistance
- Provide information and referrals
- Provide support for caregivers
- Provide equipment for people with ALS
- Advocate on behalf of people with ALS
- Fund research

## JUNE IS ALS AWARENESS MONTH

ALS Canada and the provincial ALS Societies work together 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.

## PROVINCIAL SOCIETIES

### ALS Society of Alberta (and NWT)

250 - 4723 - 1st Street SW, Calgary, AB T2G 4Y8  
403 228 3857 [www.alsab.ca](http://www.alsab.ca)

### ALS Society of British Columbia (and Yukon)

1233 - 13351 Commerce Parkway, Richmond, BC V6V 2X7  
1 800 708 3228 [www.alsbc.ca](http://www.alsbc.ca)

### ALS Society of Manitoba

2A-1717 Dublin Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3H 0H2  
204 831 1510 [www.alsmb.ca](http://www.alsmb.ca)

### ALS Society of Newfoundland & Labrador

P.O. Box 844, Corner Brook, NL A2H 6H6  
1 888 364 9499 [www.envision.ca/webs/alsnl](http://www.envision.ca/webs/alsnl)

### ALS Society of Canada

393 University Avenue, Suite 1701, Toronto, ON  
M5G 1E6 416 497 2267 [www.als.ca](http://www.als.ca)

### ALS Society of Prince Edward Island

P.O. Box 1643, Summerside, PEI C1N 2V5  
902 439 1600 [www.alspei.ca](http://www.alspei.ca)

### ALS Society of Québec

Société de la SLA du Québec, 5415 rue Paré, bureau 200  
Montreal, Québec H4P 1P7  
514 725 2653 [www.sla-quebec.ca](http://www.sla-quebec.ca)

### ALS Society of Saskatchewan

90 C Cavendish Street, Regina, SK S4N 5G7  
306 949 4100 [www.alsask.ca](http://www.alsask.ca)

