



WHAT IS ALS? HOW WE HELP

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Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a rapidly progressive, fatal neuromuscular disease. It attacks the motor neurons responsible for transmitting electrical impulses from the brain to the voluntary muscles throughout the body. When these muscles fail to receive messages, they eventually lose strength, atrophy and die, resulting in a spreading paralysis of the whole body. There is no known cause, treatment, or cure at this time.

The mind is not usually affected by ALS, although there is increasing evidence of an ALS-related dementia in some cases. The senses are not affected. Unlike other forms of paralysis, people with ALS may experience significant pain. The fight is lost when the muscles controlling the lungs can no longer maintain adequate oxygen levels.

Anyone can get ALS but it is not contagious. While not common, it is not a rare disease - 2,500 to 3,000 Canadians live with ALS. Five to 10% of cases of ALS are inherited but 90 to 95% of cases are sporadic, meaning there is no family history. Anyone can be affected.

The average life expectancy is two to five years after diagnosis, though 10 to 20% may live 10 years or more. Two to three Canadians die of ALS each day.

However, it is important to understand that improved medical care is resulting in longer and more productive lives for people with ALS and hope for a cure remains strong as research continues.

The cornflower is the national emblem of the ALS community. Despite its fragile appearance, it is a hardy wildflower found throughout Canada. Like the cornflower, people living with ALS show remarkable strength in coping with this devastating disease. Also like the cornflower, awareness of ALS – and funding for care and cure – is growing.



OUR SERVICES

- Information and referral for persons with ALS, caregivers, families and community
- Referrals to counseling and support groups (where available)
- Peer support for persons with ALS, caregivers, and family members
- Home visiting
- Equipment program (loan and purchase assistance)
- Educational materials about ALS and the support needed by persons with ALS (for healthcare providers, students, persons with ALS and family etc.)
- In-service training about ALS and the ALS Society of Ontario to the healthcare community

YOU CAN HELP . . .

- By becoming a member of the Society to give us a stronger voice.
- By becoming actively involved as a volunteer. Assignments range from a few hours once a year at a fundraiser, to committee work or friendly visiting with patients-everyone can help
- By participating in support group meetings if you, your family or a friend have been touched by ALS.
- By making a financial contribution to support the mission of the ALS Society of Ontario.
- By helping to spread the word and bring public awareness to the plight of persons with ALS everywhere.

ALS SOCIETY OF ONTARIO . LA SOCIÉTÉ ONTARIENNE DE LA SLA
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Providing independence, dignity, hope and choice to people living with ALS