



## How YOU Can Help!

- Donate today by calling ALS Ontario at **1-866-611-8545**, or donate online at [www.alsont.ca](http://www.alsont.ca) by clicking on the **Donate Now** icon
- Join our monthly giving program
- Participate, sponsor, or contribute to the **WALK for ALS** in your area (28 locations across Ontario)
- Encourage your family, friends and employer to make the ALS Society of Ontario their charity of choice
- Donate in memory or honour of a loved one
- Leave a bequest in your will
- Host a fundraising event at your home, place of business, service club or within your faith community
- Volunteer your time to support families or at the ALS Society of Ontario office

***We need your help to raise awareness and funds to support people living with ALS!***



*ALS devastates families physically, emotionally, and financially.*

Approximately 3,000 Canadians currently live with this deadly disease and more than **1,000** are living in **Ontario**.

Life expectancy:

- **80% of persons with ALS die within two to five years of diagnosis**
- Some persons with ALS die within a few short months
- Some persons with ALS live longer than five years after diagnosis

### **ALS SOCIETY OF ONTARIO**

Website: [www.alsont.ca](http://www.alsont.ca)

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**ALS Society of Ontario...  
providing equipment and  
support services for people  
living with ALS.**



## What is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)?

ALS, sometimes referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease or motor neuron disease, is a rapidly progressive and fatal neuromuscular disease. It is characterized by degeneration of a select group of nerve cells and pathways in the brain and spinal cord, which leads to progressive paralysis of the voluntary muscles. The cause of ALS is unknown and there is no effective treatment or cure at this time.

### WHO GETS ALS?

ALS can strike anyone at any time: it is not contagious and does not discriminate. ALS most often occurs between the ages of 40 and 70, but it can also occur among older and younger adults. One-third of people with ALS are under 45 years old. ALS is usually fatal within two to five years after diagnosis. There is a hereditary link in about five to 10 per cent of cases.

### WHAT ARE THE EARLY SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms and the area of the body first affected vary from person to person. Typically ALS involves muscle weakness, fatigue, wasting, stiffness, loss of tone, cramping, and/or twitching. The onset of this disease may occur in nerves associated with muscles of the upper or lower limbs, the throat, or the upper chest area.



### WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF ALS?

Progressive paralysis of the voluntary muscles leads to loss of mobility including decreased co-ordination in the hands, tripping and falling, difficulty eating, drinking and swallowing, speech problems such as slurring, and eventually a decline in the breathing function. ALS usually does not affect intellect or sensory functions (i.e. taste, touch, sight, smell and hearing). People living with ALS become trapped inside their deteriorating bodies.

### IS THERE HOPE?

The ALS Society of Ontario is dedicated to providing ALS clients with the equipment and support services they need to live with independence, dignity and choice. Our services mean the difference between hope and despair, and are essential to helping families living with ALS. The following services are provided through our community groups, regional offices and provincial office:

### Equipment Program

Our equipment program provides basic and essential equipment for people with ALS, through loan of equipment and purchase assistance.



### Information and Referral

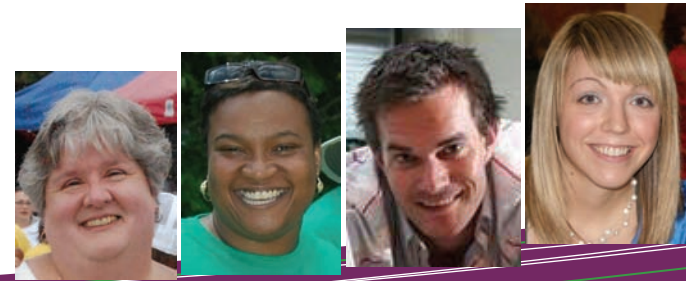
ALS Ontario meets the informational needs of our clients, their caregivers and healthcare professionals through our website, publications, and newsletters. We also provide referral services connecting clients and their caregivers to community resources.

### Education and Advocacy

Staff and volunteers at the ALS Society of Ontario give educational presentations to the general public, healthcare professionals, service clubs and employers to increase awareness of ALS and how they can help.

### Peer Support Groups

Support groups allow people with ALS and their caregivers to meet with peers and share information and experiences. The groups help provide a forum for education, create a greater comfort level in dealing with the emotional aspects of ALS, enlarge support networks and increase awareness of the services offered by the ALS Society of Ontario.



*The ALS Society of Ontario is committed to providing independence, dignity, hope and choice to people living with ALS. We are very fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers who help us with equipment delivery, support services, and the raising of much needed funds for people living with ALS and their families.*

