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Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis

Also called: ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease

Summary


Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a nervous system disease that attacks nerve cells called neurons in your brain and spinal cord. These neurons transmit messages from your brain and spinal cord to your voluntary muscles - the ones you can control, like in your arms and legs. At first, this causes mild muscle problems. Some people notice:


- Trouble walking or running
- Trouble writing
- Speech problems

Eventually, you lose your strength and cannot move. When muscles in your chest fail, you cannot breathe. A breathing machine can help, but most people with ALS die from [respiratory failure](#).

The disease usually strikes between ages 40 and 60. More men than women get it. No one knows what causes ALS. It can run in families, but usually it strikes at random. There is no cure. Medicines can relieve symptoms and, sometimes, prolong survival.

Start Here


- [ALS \(Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis\)](#)  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis](#) (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research) [Spanish](#)

- [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis \(ALS\)](#)  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke) - Short Summary [Spanish](#)
- [What Is ALS?](#) (ALS Association)

Symptoms

- [ALS Symptoms and Diagnosis](#) (ALS Association) [Spanish](#)
- [Stages of ALS](#) (Muscular Dystrophy Association)

Diagnosis and Tests

- [Diagnosis of ALS](#) (Muscular Dystrophy Association)
- [Electromyography \(EMG\) and Nerve Conduction Studies](#)  (National Library of Medicine) [Spanish](#)

Prevention and Risk Factors

- [Who Gets ALS?](#) (ALS Association)

Living With ALS

- [Assistance in Stages of ALS](#) (Muscular Dystrophy Association)
- [FYI: Breathing Difficulties](#) (ALS Association)
- [Medical Management of ALS](#) (Muscular Dystrophy Association)
- [Products to Aid in Daily Living](#) (ALS Association)

Patient Handouts

- [Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis](#) (Medical Encyclopedia) [Spanish](#)
- [Swallowing problems](#) (Medical Encyclopedia) [Spanish](#)

NIH: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

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