

May is ALS Awareness Month

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Office of Executive Management / Communication



May is ALS Awareness Month, and it is recognized each year to bring about advocacy and support for everyone diagnosed with the amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) neurodegenerative disease, sometimes known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

In 1992, President George H. W. Bush signed a proclamation recognizing May as National Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month. Since then, ALS Awareness Month is observed annually to promote support for people suffering with ALS, as well as their families.

French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot identified the disease in 1869, but the disease did not become widely known until 1939, when it ended the career of baseball great Lou Gehrig.

ALS is a progressive disease that affects the brain, nerve cells and spinal cord. There is no cure and few effective treatments. More than 6,000 people are diagnosed with ALS annually in the United States.

ALS prevents neurons in the brain from reaching the spinal cord and from there, the muscles throughout the body. Neurons regulate voluntary movement and muscle control.

Those suffering from ALS experience gradual onset of the disease, and symptoms can vary widely. Some may at first have trouble grasping things. Others may notice a change in voice pitch, according to als.org. ALS progresses and causes more and more motor neurons to die. Without neurons, the brain can no longer initiate or control voluntary movement. As the disease progresses, people may also lose the ability move, speak, eat or breathe.

For more information and to get involved, visit the [Muscular Dystrophy Association website](#).