

# The fight against ALS

Illustration by Matt Duchesne

Amotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gherig's Disease, is a neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord, which eventually leads to respiratory failure and death.

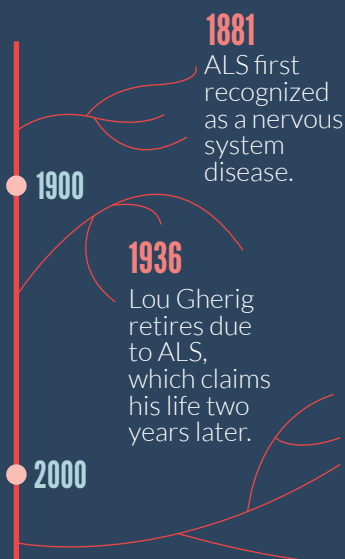
# 55

The average age of ALS patients at diagnosis

Early symptoms of ALS can be very subtle:

- muscle stiffness
- general weakness
- slurred speech
- difficulty chewing or swallowing

## A Timeline of ALS



After diagnosis, the life expectancy of ALS patients is

# 2 to 5 years

## The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge has raised



- ALS is **not** contagious.
- ALS has no **racial**, **ethnic** or **socioeconomic** boundary.
- As many as **30,000** Americans may have ALS at any given time.
- **Riluzole** is the only drug that is FDA approved to treat ALS. It typically slows the disease by a few months.

1 [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/amyotrophiclateralsclerosis/detail\\_ALS.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/amyotrophiclateralsclerosis/detail_ALS.htm)

2 <http://www.alsa.org/about-als/facts-you-should-know.html>

3 <http://www.novusbio.com//diseases/amyotrophic-lateral-sclerosis.html>