



Health & Wellness Monthly Newsletter

May 2018

May Is ALS Awareness Month

ALS is a disease of the parts of the nervous system that control voluntary muscle movement. In the United States, ALS also is called Lou Gehrig's disease, named for the Yankees baseball player who died of it in 1941.

What happens to someone with ALS?

In ALS, nerve cells that control muscle cells are gradually lost. In most cases, the cause is unknown. As these motor neurons are lost, the muscles they control become weak and then nonfunctional. Eventually, the person with ALS is paralyzed.

Death, usually from respiratory complications, typically comes between three and five years after diagnosis (some studies say after symptoms are noted, so the timing is unclear). About 10 percent of those with the disease live more than 10 years, and some survive for decades.

Modern technology has allowed people with ALS to compensate for almost every loss of function to some degree, making it possible even for those with almost no muscle function to continue to breathe, communicate, move about and use a computer. Longevity statistics may be somewhat out of date because of changes in supportive care and technology.

ALS can strike people of any age, though it usually strikes in late middle age. It's important to note that the involuntary muscles, such as those that control the heartbeat, gastrointestinal tract and bowel function, bladder and sexual functions are not directly affected in ALS. (However, prolonged inability to move and other effects of ALS can have some indirect impact.)

Pain is not a direct consequence of the disorder, although moderate pain can certainly occur as a result of immobility and its various complications.

Hearing, vision, touch and intellectual ability generally remain quite normal. Some people experience loss of control over emotional expressions

such as laughing or crying, a phenomenon thought to be directly related to the disease process.

Of course, in such a devastating disorder as ALS, it's natural for people to feel angry, sad or depressed, whether or not they experience unwanted emotional episodes.

What can be done about ALS?

Although ALS research is proceeding at an unprecedented pace, only one medication has been found to be somewhat effective against the disease and is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as an ALS treatment. That medication, riluzole (brand name Rilutek), has a modest effect in prolonging survival.

Several other medications are now in clinical trials (See "MDA's Search for Treatments & Cures.")

Until a definitive treatment or cure is found for ALS, MDA clinics and centers use a team approach to patient care that mobilizes a variety of health care professionals, all of whom aim to alleviate symptoms, maintain function and independence, prolong life and offer guidance for those with this disorder and their families.

Source: als-mda.com/publications/fa-als.html
www.WellnessProposals.com





Fat: The Good & The Bad

If think you should avoid foods that contain fat and cholesterol, like meat, eggs, milk and cheese, to protect yourself from heart disease, you may be suffering from “fat phobia.” The common belief that most healthy people need to avoid meat, dairy foods and eggs to protect against heart disease is unfounded — especially if it means missing out on the many nutrients these foods contain, including calcium, iron, zinc and vitamins B6 and B12. These nutrients often end up in short supply especially in the diets of older adults.

The Skinny on Fat Cutting back on fat?

Getting enough fat? How do you find a happy balance? Fat is an important part of a healthful eating plan. It provides energy, fat-soluble vitamins, essential fatty acids and it makes food taste good. The tricky part is the fine line between enough and too much. It is also important to choose the more healthful--unsaturated fats. Unsaturated fats can help lower blood cholesterol, but only when used in moderate amounts and in place of saturated fats. To reduce your intake, switch to oils and margarines made from liquid oil. Try to limit hydrogenated oils which have more saturated fat. Do you avoid certain foods for fear of weight gain? If so, you may be missing out on essential fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins. A better way to control fat is to eat foods that contain healthy fats like olive or canola oils and pay attention to your portion sizes. Choose lean meats, low-fat dairy and plant proteins for variety and nutrition.

Olive Oil: Good for You Fat?

Plenty of research suggests that cooking with olive oil can be beneficial to your health. Its monounsaturated fat content can help lower LDL, or “bad” blood cholesterol. Olive oil comes in a number of varieties, including virgin, light and extra virgin. All are the same in terms of fat content, either types of fat or total amounts of fat. The difference in olive oils lies mostly in the flavor. Extra virgin olive oil is low in acid, resulting in a fruity flavor and aroma, so you don’t need to use as much to enjoy the flavor. Virgin olive oil is more acidic, meaning you need to use more to get the distinct olive oil flavor. Light olive oil is lighter in color and flavor. Whichever type of olive oil you prefer, remember they all have something else in common: They are all high in total fat and calories, so go easy on portions.

Source: Wellness Proposals

Sun Safety



What Damage Occurs with UV?

The short-term results of unprotected exposure to UV rays are sunburn and tanning. Long-term exposure causes pre-maturely aged skin, wrinkles, loss of elasticity, dark patches and actual skin cancers.

Who is in Most Danger from Sun Exposure?

You need to be especially careful in the sun if you:

- have numerous or irregular moles
- were previously treated for skin cancer
- work indoors all week and then get a tan on weekends
- have freckles and burn before tanning
- have fair skin; or blond, red, or light brown hair
- have a family history of skin cancer
- live or vacation at high altitudes
- spend a lot of time outdoors
- take certain medications (see prescription information)

What are Long Term Effects of Sun Damage?

The American Cancer Society estimates more than 1 million new cases of highly curable basal and squamous cell cancers will be diagnosed this year. The most serious form of skin cancer is melanoma, which is diagnosed in more than 60,000 people each year and causes several thousand deaths.

How Do I Protect Myself from UV?

It is impossible to completely avoid sunlight and it would be un-wise to reduce your level of activity because you don't want to be outdoors. But there are precautions that you can take to limit your amount of exposure to UV.

1. Limit direct sun exposure during midday

Ultraviolet rays are most intense between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM. Limit outdoor activities during these times.

2. Cover up

Wear clothing to protect as much skin as possible. Dark colors provide more protection than light colors and a tightly woven fabric provides greater protection than loosely woven clothing.

3. Wear a hat

A hat with at least a 2 to 3-inch brim all around is ideal because it protects areas often exposed to the sun, such as the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp.

4. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher

Experts recommend products with an SPF of at least 15. An SPF 4 blocks out 75% of the burning UV rays while an SPF 15 blocks out 93% of the burning UV rays.

5. Wear sunglasses that block UV rays

The ideal sunglasses should block 99% to 100% of UVA and UVB radiation. Check the label to be sure they do.

6. Avoid sunlamps and tanning booths

Many people believe that the UV rays of tanning beds are harm-less, but tanning lamps emit UVA and frequently emit UVB also. Both cause skin damage, and contribute to skin cancers.

7. Check your skin regularly

Examine your skin after a shower or bath. Signs to look for are changes in size, texture, shape, and color of blemishes or a sore that does not heal. If you find any changes, see your doctor or health care provider.

Source: American Cancer Society Website