

# JANUARY IS ALZHEIMER AWARENESS MONTH

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## Early diagnosis; improved quality of life

Did you know that because of the aging population, it is estimated that around 1.4 million Canadians will suffer from Alzheimer's disease over the next 20 years? Unfortunately, fear of the disease and prejudice against it often prevent affected people from seeking help. Consequently, about half of Canadians wait too long to be diagnosed, not realizing that early diagnosis can greatly improve their quality of life and that of their families.

It is important to consult a doctor when you notice memory loss, difficulty performing daily tasks, or mood or behaviour changes. Contrary to popular belief, these symptoms are not part of the normal aging process. When Alzheimer's disease is diagnosed early, people are able to make their own decisions concerning their health care. The treatment is also more effective when administered in the early stages. Similarly, early diagnosis allows patients to learn more about the disease, to seek support, and plan for the future according to their personal priorities.

The stigma of Alzheimer's is partly to blame for the fact that people are reluctant to ask for help. For that reason, the Alzheimer Society of Canada invites the public to speak openly about the disease during January, Alzheimer Awareness Month. As more attention is given to Alzheimer's the easier it will be to overcome prejudices and correct the misinformation that often circulates about it. To learn more, visit [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca) or [www.earlydiagnosis.ca](http://www.earlydiagnosis.ca).



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