

brain cells those Keep working!

During the month of January, which is Alzheimer Awareness Month, we should all become more aware of the fact that this illness is affecting younger and younger people. In Canada, more than 71.000 people affected by Alzheimer's or a related dementia, are less than 65 years old, a figure which represents about 15% of all the victims of this disease. This information allows us to see another side of Alzheimer's: that of the actual and future impact of this neurodegenerative disease on society as a whole. Our health care system will be affected as well as all types of businesses and industries. Indeed, the generation most affected by this disease are the baby-boomers, many of whom are our leaders and mentors.



By keeping our minds active and stimulated by games, classes and cultural activities we can reduce the risks of forgetting.

Canadians are Invited to do everything they can, and must do, to lessen the impact of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. The greatest known risk factor is increasing age so it is important to keep our brains working in order to give it the exercise it needs. Just as physical activity improves the functioning of the body, cerebral activity can help reduce the risks of contracting Alzheimer's disease: play games which exercise the brain (crosswords...); explore new interests such as learning how to play a musical instrument or take classes; modify your routine; read and participate in culture activities: continue hobbies or discover. New ones, etc.

By never forgetting to play, to learn, to communicate, to think, we contribute directly to the well-being of our brains. In this way, pensioners, business managars artists, bakers and accountants will be able to continue as leaders and mentors in our communities.

A rising tide Currently, there are 500,000 Canadians living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, a number that within a generation could reach more than one million people across the country. During January, Alzheimer's Awareness Month. we must realize that our aging population is fuelling a rising tide of dementia that threatens to Overwhelm our health and social systems.

"Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are a rising concern in this country, an epidemic that has the potential to cripple the Canadian health care system if changes are not made today," says Debbie Benczkowski, Interim

Chief Executive Officer of the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

According to Statistics Canada, 4.3 million Canadians are aged 65 or older, meaning that one in seven of us are now senior citizens. By 2015, the number of seniors is expected to reach 5.4 million. As age remains the number one risk factor for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, it has been long feared that the aging of our population was going to have direct consequences on the number of people living with these illnesses.

MEASURE OF HOPE

However, by investing in research and prevention, by educating and supporting our caregivers, and by raising awareness and ensuring that people are diagnosed early in the disease process, we can make a difference. But the Alzheimer Society of Canada can't do it alone. The voice of the Society is only as strong as the number of Canadians we have supporting our call for action. For more information on Rising Tide, please visit www.alzheimer.ca.



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