

Early diagnosis keeps your life from unravelling

Almost half of Canadians with Alzheimer's disease are waiting too long to be diagnosed. This year, the Alzheimer Society wants to cut those numbers.

January is Alzheimer Awareness Month. It's the Alzheimer Society's annual effort to increase understanding about the disease — and reduce the stigma that keeps people from talking about it — and talking to their doctors.

Getting the information you need helps you live the life you want today, and stitch together a stronger future. Early diagnosis and recognizing the warning signs go hand in hand. Whether you're experiencing possible symptoms yourself or are concerned for someone you care about, watch for any of these 10 signs:

- Memory loss affecting day-to-day abilities – forgetting things often or struggling to retain new information.
- Difficulty performing familiar tasks – forgetting how to do something you've been doing your whole life, such as preparing a meal or getting dressed.
- Problems with language – forgetting words or substituting words that don't fit the context.
- Disorientation in time and space – not knowing what day of the week it is or getting lost in a familiar place.
- Impaired judgment – not recognizing a medical problem that needs attention or wearing light clothing on a cold day.
- Problems with abstract thinking – not understanding what numbers signify on a calculator, for example, or how they're used.
- Misplacing things – putting things in strange places, like an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.



- Changes in mood and behaviour—exhibiting severe mood swings from being easy-going to quick-tempered.
- Changes in personality – behaving out of character such as feeling paranoid or threatened.
- Loss of initiative – losing interest in friends, family and favourite activities.

Learn more about *normal aging versus dementia*, or to talk to someone at your local Alzheimer Society, go to [Find help near you](#).

If you think you might have symptoms of dementia, learn more at www.earlydiagnosis.ca and see your doctor.