

## You may not know that:

### People with Alzheimer Disease

- Need to feel valued
- May be concerned about how the disease will affect themselves and their families
- Need companionship
- Strive to maintain an active and independent life
- Have the same needs as each and every one of us
- Have abilities, skills and aspirations

### Alzheimer caregivers

- Often feel alone and isolated from friends
- May need assistance, but are often reluctant to ask
- Are often unable to do errands or complete household tasks
- Experience stress that sometimes affects their health
- Need regular breaks from caregiving
- Need someone to listen



### Helping the Alzheimer Society

There are many things you can do to help the Alzheimer Society. Consider making a donation to support our work. Volunteer at your local Society or organize a Coffee Break™, the Society's nationwide fundraising event, at your workplace or home.

The Alzheimer Society is a national not-for-profit health organization dedicated to helping people affected by Alzheimer Disease. The Society has numerous resources and support programs for people with the disease and their caregivers. The Society also funds research into finding the cause and cure of the disease, and into improved methods of caregiving.

For more information, contact your local Alzheimer Society or visit our Web site at [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca).

*Help for today. Hope for tomorrow...*

## Alzheimer Society

Alzheimer Society of Canada  
20 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 1200, Toronto, Ontario, M4R 1K8  
Tel: (416) 488-8772 1-800-616-8816 Fax: (416) 488-3778  
E-mail: [info@alzheimer.ca](mailto:info@alzheimer.ca) Web site: [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)

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# Ways to Help

*Assisting People  
Living With  
Alzheimer Disease*



## Alzheimer Society

## **Alzheimer Disease**

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Alzheimer Disease is a progressive, degenerative disease. The disease usually begins with small changes in a person's behaviour and memory. Eventually it affects all aspects of a person's life - the ability to think, understand, remember, communicate and perform simple tasks. One in 13 Canadians over the age of 65 has Alzheimer Disease or a related dementia.

### **Lending a Hand**

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As more and more people are being affected by Alzheimer Disease, chances are you will know someone who is living with the disease. They may be a relative, a neighbour, a co-worker or a friend.

Having the disease, or caring for someone who does, can be challenging. Friends, neighbours and extended family are important sources of support for the family.

Perhaps you want to help but don't know where to begin. Reading this brochure will give you some ideas to offer practical help and show that you care.

## **Visiting the person with Alzheimer Disease**

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### **Arrange a convenient time for your visit**

Choose a time that is best for the person. Shorten your visit if the person shows signs of fatigue.

### **Communication is the key**

Use gestures as well as words. Pace the conversation allowing time for the person to respond.

### **Help to clarify**

If the person seems confused, identify yourself and why you are there. "It's Jane, I came to visit you today."

### **Laughter can be contagious**

Recall humorous experiences you both shared. "I remember when we both..." Take pleasure in each moment.

### **Be prepared to listen**

People with the disease may want to share their feelings. Remain open and sympathetic.

### **Establish connection through a common interest**

Continue your favourite activity together. Listen to music. Take a walk. Concentrate on the person's talents and abilities.

### **Show that you care**

We all communicate through emotion, expression and touch. Holding a hand, or smiling when talking can convey more than words.

## **Caring for the Caregiver**

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### **Take time to listen**

Let the person know you are available to listen when they feel overwhelmed and need to talk with someone.

### **Do little things - they mean a lot**

If you're on your way out to do an errand, call and see if the caregiver needs anything.

### **Give the caregiver a break**

Offer to visit with the person with the disease. Encourage the caregiver to spend time on a favourite hobby, run some errands or spend time alone.

### **Provide a change of scenery**

Suggest an outing to the park or a visit to your home. Whenever possible, include the person with Alzheimer Disease in the outing. Choose an activity that everyone will enjoy.

### **Keep in touch**

Maintain contact—a phone call, card, e-mail or a visit means a great deal. The disease has an impact on all family members - spouses, adult children and even young children. Be attentive to their needs, too.

### **Become informed**

Learn about Alzheimer Disease and how it affects the person and the family. Contact your local Alzheimer Society for more information or visit our Web site at [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca).

### **Stay the course**

It is a long journey for caregivers. Any support you can provide along the way will likely be appreciated.