

There is a growing amount of evidence that lifestyle choices that keep mind and body fit may help reduce the risk.



An end to the myths

Alzheimer Disease is a degenerative, fatal brain disorder that destroys vital brain cells. It most often occurs in people over 65, but can affect adults at an earlier age. One in thirteen Canadians over the age of 65 has Alzheimer Disease or a related dementia.

The Alzheimer Society is a not-for-profit health organization dedicated to helping people affected by Alzheimer Disease.

Don't let the myths about Alzheimer Disease prevent you from:

- learning about the disease
- seeking help
- treating people with the disease with respect.

Get the facts.

Contact your local Alzheimer Society, visit our Web site at www.alzheimer.ca or call 1-800-616-8816.

Help for Today. Hope for Tomorrow.

Alzheimer Society

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Dispelling the myths



confusion is often frustrating or even frightening. By learning about the disease, adapting the person's surroundings and changing the way we communicate with the person, aggressive responses may be preventable.

Myth 10 People with Alzheimer Disease cannot understand what is going on around them.

Reality: Some people with Alzheimer Disease do understand what is going on around them; others have difficulty. Alzheimer Disease does affect a person's ability to communicate and make sense of the world around them, although it affects each person differently. When we assume someone does not understand, feelings can be hurt unintentionally. The fact is a person with Alzheimer Disease is still the same person as before and needs to be treated with dignity and respect.

Alzheimer Society

Alzheimer Disease: Myth and reality

Over the years, many myths have evolved about what Alzheimer Disease is, who gets it and how it affects people who have it. These myths can add to the stigma attached to the disease and stand in the way of our ability to understand and help people with it. At the Alzheimer Society, we believe the sooner we dispel the myths, the better we'll be able to respond to the reality.

Myth 1 Because someone in my family has Alzheimer Disease, I'm going to get it.

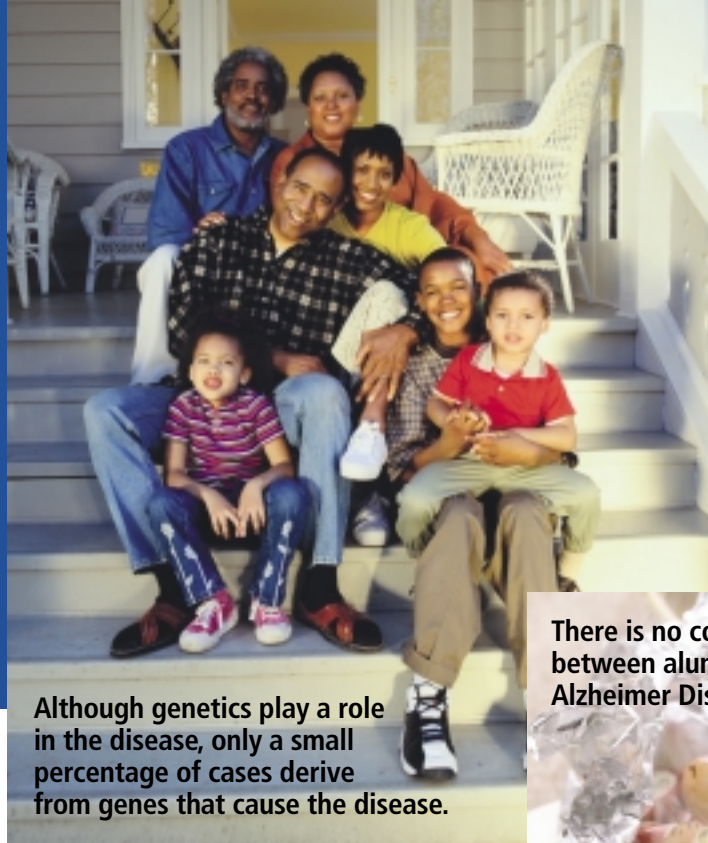
Reality: Although genetics play a role in the disease, only five to ten per cent of cases derive from genes that cause the disease. The majority of cases have no single identifiable cause. The role of genetics continues to be studied.

Myth 2 Alzheimer Disease is only an old person's disease.

Reality: While age is the most significant known risk factor for Alzheimer Disease, not everyone will develop the disease as they age. People in their 40s and 50s can also be affected. What's most important to understand is that Alzheimer Disease is not a normal part of aging.

Myth 3 There is a cure for Alzheimer Disease.

Reality: There is no cure for Alzheimer Disease, but there are medications and other approaches that can manage some of the symptoms in some people. The good news is Alzheimer Disease researchers have made great strides and are optimistic about finding a cure.



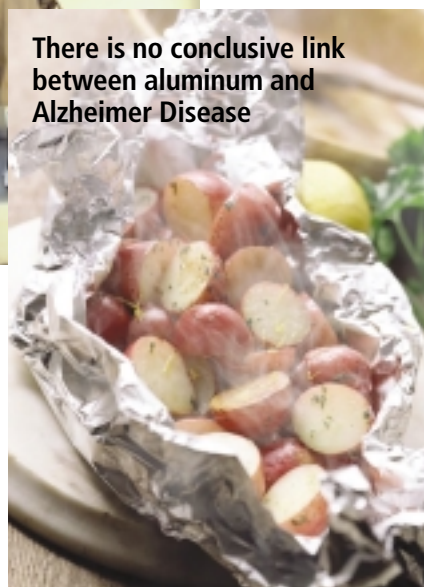
Although genetics play a role in the disease, only a small percentage of cases derive from genes that cause the disease.

Myth 4 Memory loss means Alzheimer Disease.

Reality: Many people have trouble with their memory, but that in itself does not mean they have Alzheimer Disease. When memory loss affects day-to-day function and is coupled with lack of judgment and reasoning, or changes in communication abilities, it's best to visit a doctor to determine the cause of the symptoms.

Myth 5 Aluminum causes Alzheimer Disease.

Reality: Although there's been a lot of research into the connection between aluminum and Alzheimer Disease, there's no conclusive evidence to show a link. The disease may develop from a combination of many risk factors, including genetics, lifestyle and environmental factors.



There is no conclusive link between aluminum and Alzheimer Disease

Myth 6 Alzheimer Disease is preventable.

Reality: Because there is no known cause for Alzheimer Disease, there is no conclusive evidence that Alzheimer Disease can be prevented. There is, however, a growing amount of evidence that lifestyle choices that keep mind and body fit may help reduce the risk. These choices include physical exercise, a healthy diet including fresh fruits, vegetables and fish, as well as keeping your brain active.

Myth 7 Vitamins, supplements and memory boosters can prevent Alzheimer Disease.

Reality: Many studies have been done to test the effectiveness of products such as vitamin E, vitamin B, and ginkgo biloba in preventing Alzheimer Disease. Mostly the findings are inconclusive, however, research in this area is ongoing.

Myth 8 If I'm diagnosed with Alzheimer Disease, my life is over.

Reality: Many people with the disease live meaningful, active lives. They have a sense of purpose and do not feel their lives are over. Earlier diagnosis and medications are helping. It is also important to provide appropriate surroundings,

services, support and activities to people with the disease to help enrich their quality of life throughout the progression of the disease.

Myth 9 All people who have Alzheimer Disease become violent and aggressive.

Reality: Alzheimer Disease affects each person differently. For the person with Alzheimer Disease, the loss of memory and the resulting