

# Alzheimer's Disease

Mary Vu, MSc, Member of St. Michael's Parish Nursing Committee

"The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ will see that all is well again; He will confirm, strengthen and support you. His power lasts for ever and ever." Peter 5:9-10

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of a large group of disorders known as dementia. It is a fatal progressive disease that affects different areas of the brain, resulting in the following symptoms:

- Thinking and memory processes become impaired.
- Declines in behavioural abilities make routine daily tasks, like answering the telephone, a challenge to perform.
- Mood and personality may change.

Some may think that these symptoms are a normal part of aging, but they are certainly not.

## PREVENTION

Currently, 1 in 11 Canadians over age 65 have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. With few treatments to slow or stop dementia, making healthy lifestyle choices may be the most effective way to reduce your risk of developing this disease, or slow its progression. Some steps to a healthy brain as suggested by the Alzheimer's Society of Canada are:



### Make healthy food choices.

Follow recommendations by Canada's Food Guide.



### Be physically active.

Adding any physical activity can be beneficial even if you aren't active now.



### Have an active social life.

Increase social interaction through work, volunteer activities, travel, hobbies, family, and friends.



### Stay mentally stimulated.

Learn something new, enjoy crossword puzzles, or practice a musical instrument. Vary your habits.

## CAREGIVER BURDEN

A person with Alzheimer's will eventually need full-time care with living activities, such as eating, bathing, and using the bathroom.



Unpaid immediate family members are commonly caregivers. Providing substantial support may negatively impact the caregiver's physical and psychological well-being, especially while balancing other job and family responsibilities. This burden may increase a caregiver's risk for depression and may worsen physical health problems.

One strategy for caregivers to better cope with Alzheimer's is to become aware of the changes the disease will cause. This awareness can help the caregiver make well-informed decisions, and to provide the best care at home.

The First Link Program offered through the Alzheimer's Society connects persons with Alzheimer's and their caregivers with access to services and information as soon as possible after diagnosis.

## PLEASE JOIN US

**Sunday September 18<sup>th</sup> after 9am Mass**



Following mass, guest speaker Ann Wilson will give a short presentation highlighting how donations support the mission of the Alzheimer's Society, under the auspices of the St. Michael's Parish Nursing Committee. Ann is currently a caregiver for husband Carl, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2006. Ann is a retired registered nurse, and Carl was a construction supervisor until his diagnosis.

Following Ann's presentation, the Parish Nursing Committee is hosting a coffee break fundraiser to support the Alzheimer's Society. Fair trade coffee will be served in the church basement. Donations will be accepted for this worthwhile cause. All are welcome.