



January 27th, 2012

Care Giving, Aging Parents and Alzheimer's

Did you know that 747,000 Canadians were living with cognitive impairment, including dementia in 2011? That's 14.9 per cent of Canadians 65 and older. The numbers of Alzheimer's patients continues to grow. In fact, the Alzheimer's Society of Canada projects that by 2031, this figure will increase to 1.4 million.

January is Alzheimer's month and currently 3 new drugs for slowing this disease are undergoing clinical trials. Each of the drugs offer a novel approach compared to current medications: they each are administered by IV infusion and target a protein thought to be involved in the death of brain cells. Since our current drugs offer only temporary symptom reduction, hopes are high for these new products.

While Alzheimer's is a specific condition, memory loss can occur as we age for a variety of reasons – including aging itself. Fortunately, there are things you can do to improve the resiliency of your memory and reduce the impact of memory issues down the road. The brain is similar to a muscle – use it to keep it strong. And, the sooner you start, the better!

Care giving and Aging Parents

In the last few years, there has been dramatic growth in the number of seniors moving in with family for their golden years. Whether under the same roof or a separate apartment, these "new" multi-generational home arrangements fill a void between complete independence and institutional living and can offer benefits to all involved.

It can be one of the hardest conversations to have, but talking to family members about your health care preferences is critical. Although difficult, by discussing your preferences, you can create an "advance directive" for your health. They are also called living wills or health care powers of attorney. They ensure that decisions regarding your health are made by someone who understands your values, beliefs and preferences.

Making difficult decisions is always easier when good information is available. Talk to our pharmacists about health care options for you.