

# NOVEMBER AWARENESS MONTH

By Susan Landeis | November 4, 2014

November is Alzheimer's awareness and national family caregiver's month. One in ten adults cares for someone with Alzheimer's and dementia. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease of the brain that slowly robs you of your memory, cognitive skills, and the ability to perform normal daily functions. It is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. and currently, there is no cure. Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning and most commonly caused by Alzheimer's disease.

An estimated 5 million Americans over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's disease. A new case is diagnosed every 67 seconds.

It is not a normal part of aging, and can begin 10-20 years before symptoms even show. This is not just an "old person's" disease, and young people should also be aware.

How does it "feel" when you have Alzheimer's disease? A good analogy I once heard, was to imagine sitting in a classroom and being called on by the teacher and not knowing the answer to the question. Now imagine going through this humiliating experience everyday. Some of the intense emotions and feelings that people with this disease experience include: frustration, embarrassment, anger, fear, depression, confusion and isolation.

And later on, they lose the ability to understand the concept of time and space. For family, friends, and caregivers; it can be an overwhelming, frightening experience filled with catastrophic events and bittersweet moments. It is forever life changing for everyone involved.

My own personal experience began when my mother's diagnoses of Parkinson's disease, progressed into Parkinson's with dementia. This is quite common, and happens 50 to 80 percent of the time.

As her disease continued to progress, so did the number of bad days versus good days. She only survived five years before this debilitating disease took her life at the age of 73. She lived out her last two years in a nursing home.

I cannot begin to explain how this experience has impacted my life in so many ways. Almost three years later, I can't think of a better way to honor my mother's memory and all those affected by this cruel and devastating disease, than by joining the

Alzheimer's Prevention Registry to help fight against this disease.

If you would like to join in the fight against this disease, you can sign up and become a member by visiting their website at [www.bannerhealth.com](http://www.bannerhealth.com).

You can learn about, and participate in clinical trials and prevention studies on line or in your area. You will also receive information about new research and advanced scientific findings.

Won't you please help put an end to this cruel disease? You could be helping to save the memory of your loved one or maybe even your own.

\* As a participant in the "Taking action against Alzheimer's" project, supported through Banner Alzheimer's Institute, I must disclose that although they are a nonprofit organization, I was compensated for this post.

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