

CELEBRATING SENIORS

The International Day of the Older Person takes place on October 1st. This day was declared in 1990 to bring awareness to seniors, their interests, and the issues that affect them. One of the major themes associated with senior awareness is addressing and changing misconceptions about seniors and growing older.

5 Common Myths About Aging

1. **Myth:** Older Adults are set in their ways
Reality: Seniors have been through a lifetime of changes and have had the opportunity to adapt and build their resiliency. Seniors adapt to preserve their quality of life and are continually learning new things, improving skills, and creating new memories.
2. **Myth:** Older Adults are weak and frail
Reality: A certain loss of function is to be expected when aging, but there are many ways to improve health by developing good habits. Eating healthy food, getting plenty of sleep, not smoking, limiting alcohol intake, and exercising regularly play a bigger role in health and longevity than genetics. These habits are great for anyone regardless of age!
3. **Myth:** Dementia is inevitable
Reality: Having moments of forgetfulness is normal, as is a slowdown in reaction time and problem-solving. However, according to the Alzheimer's Society of Canada, dementia is *not* considered a natural part of aging. To help improve your memory, try to be physically active, mentally active (complete puzzles, read, or learn to play a musical instrument), spend time with loved ones, and sleep well. Doing these tasks is fun, engaging, and will keep your brain and memory in tip-top shape.
4. **Myth:** Older Adults are isolated and alone
Reality: It is possible to make friends at any age! Although relationships change throughout life, social connection can bring meaningful new relationships, challenge our intellect, maintain information-processing skills, and provide an outlet for sharing feelings. Looking to make new friends? Join a club, head over to a seniors' centre, or volunteer in your community.
5. **Myth:** Seniors stop contributing to society
Reality: Older adults have years of expertise, experience, and interpersonal skills that make them great mentors, volunteers, and employees. Many organizations are supported by senior volunteers and greatly contribute to society.

These misconceptions can limit an older person's freedom to live the lives they choose and for society to benefit from seniors' experience and knowledge.

Celebrate International Day of the Older Person this October 1st by challenging yourself and others to change any misconceptions you may have about older adults and instead focus on the positive realities of aging.

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Submitted by:
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