

**Your Health and Safety Matters!**



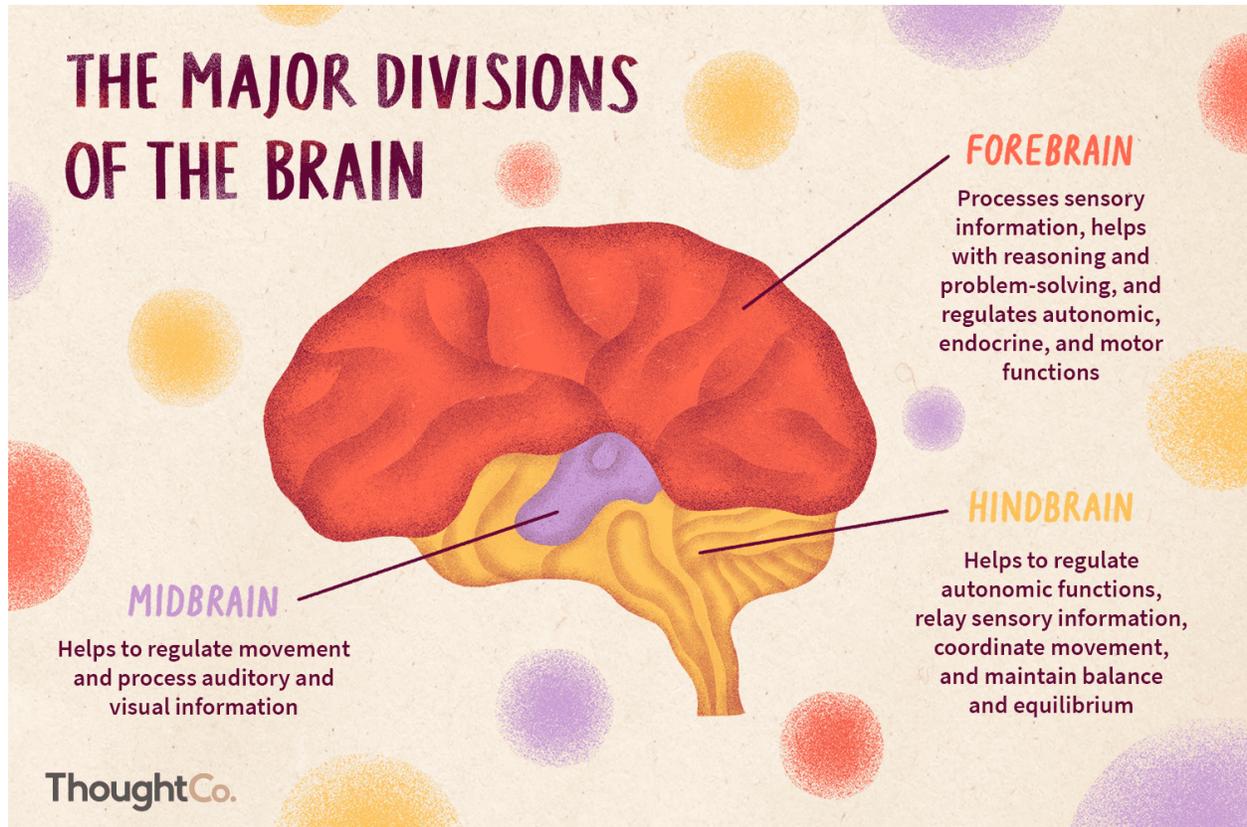
A WEEK-LONG CELEBRATION OF THE BRAIN

# **Brain Awareness Week 2022**

March 14-20, 2022

## Did you know??

The brain consists of three parts:



The brain continues to develop well into the 20's of life and continues to change throughout life.

It is a "myth" that we only use 10% of our brain, every portion has a function and is hard at work.

Our brains have 100 billion (Billion) neurons which are known as "gray matter" that process information.

Learning a second language before age 5 changes how the brain will develop in later life, enabling a denser gray matter by adulthood.

If the brain were a "hard drive" it would hold 4 Terabytes of information, enough to hold 4% of the entire Library of Congress data.

What you eat affects your brain, based upon a test of one Million New York State students which showed that *eating a lunch without preservatives or artificial dyes scored 14% higher on IQ tests.*

Another study showed that those *eating seafood at least once a week had a 30% lower occurrence of dementia.*



The Size of your brain does not matter, Einstein's brain weighted 1,230 grams while the average male's brain weights 1,360 grams.

Information in your Brain travels at 268 Miles per hour, *drinking alcohol slows this down.*

*Men process information primarily from the left (analytical) side of the brain while women tend to use both sides of their brain at the same time.*

**1) True/False: Dreams are useless.**

**False!** Research has found that when learning a new task, people who have dreams related to the task may actually improve their performance.

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In one study at Harvard Medical School, students were asked to navigate a difficult maze, starting at a different point in the maze each time. During a break, one group of students was asked to nap while another group remained awake. *Students in the nap group who dreamed about the maze performed better the next time they tried the maze,* while those who dreamed about other things or who stayed awake did not improve.

**Dreaming can take place during both REM and non-REM sleep.** REM stands for “rapid eye movement” because the dreamer’s eyes move around under their eyelids during this phase of sleep. REM is the phase of sleep during which dreaming typically occurs, and dreams during REM sleep tend to be wild and illogical. *But dreams can also take place during non-REM sleep. These dreams are often more thoughtful and logical than REM dreams and appear to be more important for learning.*

## **2) True/False: Your brain functions best on Crimini mushrooms and beef brains.**

**True** - though mushrooms and beef brains may be extreme examples of what keeps your brain working at its best. Still, good food choices do more than help your body grow, repair itself, and fight off illness. Food choices have an effect on how well your brain works, too.

Neurons, the cells of the brain, have a fatty coating called myelin that helps impulses move quickly from cell to cell. *Your brain needs the right combination of proteins and fats from food sources to create myelin and to build new connections between neurons. Your brain’s ability to create new connections is closely tied to its ability to keep up in class and to learn new things.*

The brain also relies on neurotransmitters to relay impulses from neuron to neuron. *Neurotransmitters are the brain’s chemical messengers, and different neurotransmitters are built from different starter materials. An example of one of these starter materials is tryptophan, a substance found in a variety of healthy foods including shrimp, Crimini mushrooms, tuna, spinach, eggs, soybeans, broccoli, and cow’s milk.* The body needs tryptophan to make serotonin, a neurotransmitter that is linked to learning, memory, and motivation.

In the spirit of brain awareness week, we discovered that beef brains are actually a lean source of protein. But if you’re like us, you’ll stick with the chicken, turkey and fish!

## **3) True/False: Your brain is competitive. With itself.**

**True.** The human brain has incredible potential. *People have successfully trained their brains to perform amazing feats of memory and computation, monks have learned to alter their body temperature by controlling their brain waves with meditation, and people with brain damage have regained lost abilities that we used to think were irreversible.*

You’ve probably heard the expression “use it or lose it,” which means that we lose skills when we don’t practice them in daily life. That’s because the brain actually restructures itself based on how we use it most often, and those structural changes affect our performance. *We get better at skills that we practice, and we lose skills that we neglect.* When it comes to student learning, “use it or lose it” is very real – especially during the summer months.

Say, for example, that a student reads 30 minutes every day during the school year. Then summer vacation rolls around and without the structure of school he reads only 30 minutes each week. His brain is going to think that he doesn’t need all of those neural

connections for reading anymore, and it will actually change the way that his neurons are connected and devote them to other activities that he's engaged in more often – say, playing sports or watching TV. This is called competitive plasticity.

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