

## Brain Day Student and Teacher FAQ

The students and teacher in your class are going to be excited and curious about what they learned during Brain Day. This document provides answers to some frequently asked questions asked during Brain Day.

- **Remember, as a Brain Day Instructor your role is to talk about injury prevention. Sometimes, questions get off topic and can be outside the scope of Brain Day and your role as a volunteer. See section 3 for examples of these questions, and ways you can respond.**
- **Concussions:** The topic of concussion is big in the news and injury prevention, so your team may receive many questions on this topic. Parachute will be piloting a concussion module in March 2013, with hopes of including this component in Brain Day 2013/2014 material.
- **It is OK if you don't know the answer to a question.** Refer teachers to the Parachute website for more information, or have them email the Parachute Brain Day Coordinator: [brainday@parachutecanada.org](mailto:brainday@parachutecanada.org).

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## **Section 1: Common questions, module specific**

### **1. Can the brain heal itself?**

Even though neurons cannot repair themselves, we are able to find other healthy neurons in the body and make new connections, so that we can perform the same activities even if some of our neurons are hurt. However, not all injuries to our brain can be repaired like this. If we damage too many neurons, there won't be enough healthy neurons left to make connections with. Preventing damage to your brain and neurons is the best treatment!

### **2. Will loud noises damage the ears of children? What about adults?**

Hearing loss experienced from loud noises is permanent, no matter your age. If the music you are listening to is so loud that you cannot hear other things going on around you, it is damaging your hearing and is a safety hazard (e.g. if you are riding your bike and listening to music, you may not hear the cars behind you).

### **3. When you burn your tongue from a hot drink do taste buds die? Do they regrow?**

Sometimes when you drink something hot or eat a lot of sour candy and your tongue feels funny, this is your taste buds dying. However, your taste buds will come back! Scientists and doctors don't completely understand how the taste buds regrow, but remember that your tongue is only one part of the "tasting" process. What other senses do we use to "taste" food? (Answer: smell, sight)

### **4. Why do you see the opposite colours in the cone photobleaching experiment?**

Our eyes have three types of cones (cells). Each cone detects red, green or blue colour. When you stare at an image for a long time, the cones in your eyes get tired from seeing the same colour(s) for so long. When the screen becomes white, the cells that are not tired respond, creating an image in the opposite colour on the screen. Ask: Can anyone tell us why this is important for survival? Answer: Our eyes quickly readjust to any changes, because changes could mean something like danger or prey, are near.

## **Section 2: Common questions, injury specific**

### **1. Why can some people walk after a spinal cord injury and others can't?**

Recovery after an injury depends on many factors. These include the amount of bleeding, how quickly the person can get to a doctor/the hospital, and where on the spine the injury happened. The closer the spinal cord injury is to your neck area, the more likely it is going to affect your arms, middle of the body, and legs. Sometimes injuries only affect one side of the body.

### **2. What is happening to the brain when I get a concussion?**

The brain is surrounded by fluid [“cerebral spinal fluid”], layers of tissue to help cushion it, and a skull. Some things, like hitting your head, can cause the brain to move in the skull, which causes bruising on the brain. While most concussions are mild, some can cause a lot of damage to the neurons in your brain. As we've learned today, the brain is very important for many different things. It is important to take time off and rest after a head injury.

### **3. Is a concussion only when you lose consciousness?**

A concussion can happen even if someone is awake the entire time. Make sure you tell your teacher, parents or a doctor if you hit your head and start feeling headaches or pressure in your head, vomiting and dizziness, and/or difficulty around light and noise.

### **4. How do I know whether my headache is a concussion?**

Usually, a headache caused by a concussion happens after an accident, like a fall or something hitting your head. To be safe, make sure you tell your teacher and parent about the accident, and that your head is hurting.

### **5. What does it mean when I have a headache?**

There are several reasons you get headaches – when you're sick, stressed, sitting in a funny position, etc. Your brain does not have any pain receptors, so the pain you experience during a headache is coming from other parts of your body near your head. Things like not drinking enough water or tight muscles can affect pain receptors near your head [link it back to neurons and spinal cords]. Ask: What are some of the things you do when you have a headache?

### **6. Do we really use only 10% of our brains?**

We use 100% of our brains! However, we may not use 100% of our brains at the same time. This myth comes from the observation that at any given time, only 10% of neurons are active and sending signals. If 100% of our neurons were active and sending signals all the time, it would be very difficult for us to concentrate!

### **Section 3: Questions outside the scope of injury prevention**

Questions like these are out of the scope of Brain Day and your role as a volunteer. We are not experts on the topic of drugs, cancer, or medical treatment, and do not expect you to be either. Parachute does not give advice or guidance in areas outside the realm of injury prevention for liability reasons. Please redirect questions like these, or refer them to a doctor, teacher, or parent.

- What about our brain allows us to talk when animals can't?
- Why are drugs bad for your brain?
- What is a brain tumour?
- What is the best thing to do to keep your brain healthy?

General answer: “These are great questions! Unfortunately I am not an expert on this topic and can't give you all the answers. However, I am very excited about the chance to talk to you about injury prevention. What are some of the ways you protect your bodies when you're on the playground?”

## **Section 4: Common questions, Teacher FAQ**

### **1. How would you suggest making it 'cool' for the kids to wear helmets, especially as they start going into middle school and high school?**

To start, be a role model to your students. Ensure you and your colleagues wear protective gear with your students during physical activity. Further, promoting athletes and celebrities who wear protective gear during activity is also a great way to keep helmets “cool”. LeBron James (basketball) wears a helmet while biking to practices and games, and Shaun White (snowboarding) is an advocate for helmets during snowboarding. For other helmet related questions please see Instructor’s Guide Helmet FAQ’s.

### **2. Can my child’s class receive a Brain Day presentation?**

Please contact the Parachute Brain Day Coordinator at [brainday@parachutecanada.org](mailto:brainday@parachutecanada.org). If there is a local site near you, we will put you in touch with a Site Coordinator to determine presentation availability. In the event there are no volunteers in your area, Parachute has put together an Online Brain Day kit that teachers can use to deliver the program themselves.

### **3. Do the risks of injury outweigh the benefits of playing some sports (like hockey or football) for children?**

Physical activity is an important part of positive youth and child development. All activities will have an inherent risk, but taking safety precautions like the ones we have talked about today will help to ensure children can be active, have fun, and stay safe. Risk of injury is dependent on a child’s skill level, physical development, how they’re feeling that day, and those around them. Parachute advises everyone to use discretion.