

BRAIN TEASERS

The brain is the most complex thing in the universe. On one level, it's a softball-sized collection of cells, chemical and connective tissue. On another level — it's the totality of all things. But let's not get philosophical.

LET'S LOOK AT SOME AMAZING BRAIN FACTS...

THE AMAZIN' BRAIN

A truly unique, one-of-a-kind organ. Here are just a handful of ways it's incredible:

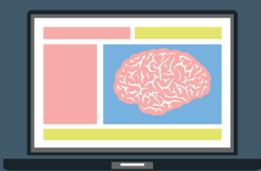


The human brain is the only object of any kind that can **CONTEMPLATE ITSELF.**



The brain only feels pleasure: **THERE ARE NO PAIN RECEPTORS IN THE BRAIN.**

(Migraine and headache pain arise in the meninges — the brain's covering)



Brains are **MORE EFFICIENT THAN COMPUTERS** in every way.



The brain **RUNS ON ELECTRICITY**, producing enough power to light a 25-watt bulb.



The brain is both the **HOTTEST** (2.5 degrees C warmer than core body temperature) and **"HOTTEST"** (arousal actually starts in your brain) part of the body.



The **"RINGING" IN YOUR EARS** is actually occurring in your brain.

BRAIN BASICS

The collection of tissue we call the brain is actually an electrochemical engine that burns calories and generates thoughts. Here are some physical brain facts to think about:

The brain is at least **HALF FATS.**

Brains have the consistency of a **LOOSE-GELATIN DESSERT.** Brains removed for study are specially treated to make them firm.

Your brain has **100,000 MILES OF BLOOD VESSELS** — enough to circle the earth 4x.

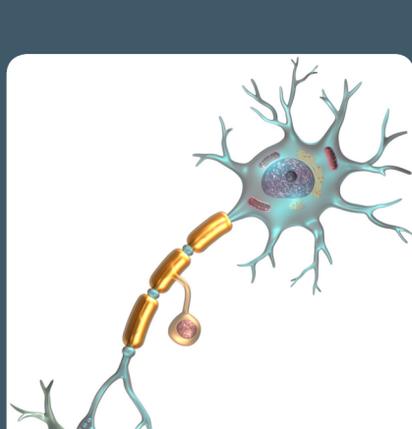
Your **EYEBALLS ARE AN EXTENSION** of your brain and are directly connected to it.

In many cultures, animal brains are considered a delicacy. Downside: **BRAINS ARE HIGH IN CHOLESTEROL** and they may contain agents that cause "mad cow" and other diseases.

The collection of neurons lining the stomach and intestines operates independently to digest food and is sometimes called **"THE SECOND BRAIN."**

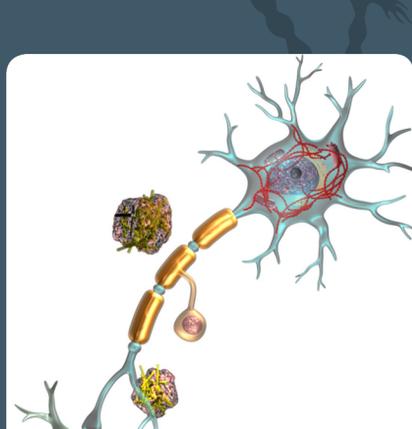
LOST IN THE NEURON FOREST

Thinking takes place in the brain. Specifically, in cells called neurons. Neurons are connected to each other by branches. Brain diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and multiple sclerosis take place among the branches in what is called "the neuron forest." Here's a highly simplified field guide to their effects:



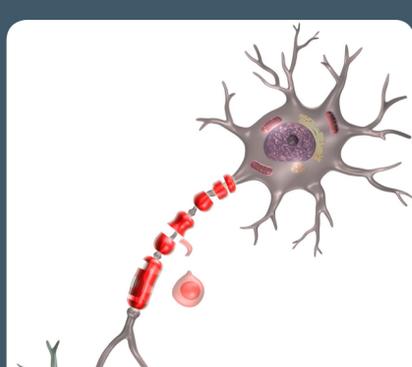
• **PRISTINE FOREST** •
HEALTHY BRAIN

Healthy neurons have smooth branches (known as dendrites) in elegant clusters.



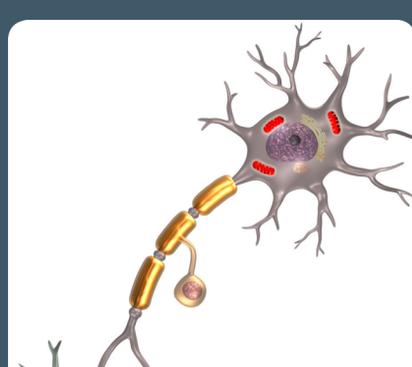
• **TANGLED, GLUEY BRANCHES** •
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

There are tangles inside the neurons. Sticky bits of protein form around them. The brain loses memory, mass and other function. Cause: unknown.



• **FRAYED BARK** •
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

The covering of the branches (or myelin) wears away, peels off or otherwise disappears. Brain signals are no longer insulated from one another. They get mixed up. Cause: little understood.



• **SAPLESS BRANCHES** •
PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Brain cells and their branches need a substance called dopamine to transmit messages properly. When dopamine-producing cells stop working, messaging breaks down. Cause: barely known.

SOURCES:

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