

thinkfirst



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CANADA
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BrainWaves

THINKFIRST CANADA

A CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD INJURY PREVENTION

www.thinkfirst.ca

Get Your Brain in Gear

If springtime brings to mind melting snow giving way to blades of green grass, birdsongs replacing the howling wind, and thousands of 10-year-olds learning to spell "OCCIPITAL LOBE", you must be looking forward to Brain Day 2011!

ThinkFirst is always working towards improved awareness of the importance of brain and spinal cord health and injury prevention, but Brain Awareness Week (March 14-20, 2011) gives our work special attention and extra motivation to get Canadians thinking about their thinking organ – the brain! Did you know that the human brain

has the same consistency as jell-o, protected by a skull that's only as thick as a pencil? That damage to the brain can rarely be fixed? If you think about it, those are pretty good reasons to play safe and prevent injury.

But the brain does much more than think and reason. It is the place where our perceptions of the world come together – where touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing, memories, and emotions combine to produce our sense of ourselves and our world. This is why brain injuries are so devastating. Not only are they painful, but they have the potential to detract from our experience

of life and those around us. The good news is that brain injuries are preventable!

Since 2004 ThinkFirst has been bringing this message to grade 4, 5, and 6 classrooms during March each year, with the *Brain Day* program. Brain Day is a neuroscience-based injury

prevention program that offers lessons about the structure and function of the brain, spinal cord, and nervous system by engaging students in hands-on experiments, fun activities, and age-appropriate lessons. Each lesson offers critical thinking questions about how brain injuries can happen, and the ways in which each student can prevent them – by playing safe, respecting their abilities, looking out for others, and wearing appropriate protective gear. ThinkFirst grounds its programs, like Brain Day, in research that helps develop our educational injury prevention materials and methods based

on the best available evidence. Evaluation in 2007 by York University researchers confirmed significant knowledge increases for students who completed the ThinkFirst Brain Day program. Notable improvements included knowledge of helmet durability, brain injury, and helmet maintenance.

So how is Brain Day shaping up for 2011? It's alive and growing! ThinkFirst is ramping up for a record-breaking year, with plans to present Brain Day to over 15 000 students from the Maritimes to Vancouver. Brain Day 2011 has new and exciting things in store, including launching in new locations, self contained brain day kits and a whole new look and feel to the program.

This kind of growth wouldn't be possible without the very hard work of hundreds of intrepid volunteers from universities and research units across the country, as well as the support of our dedicated Chapters. Without their help, Brain Day would not be the success it is today.

If you are interested in learning more about ThinkFirst's Brain Day program or If you'd like more information about Brain Days in your area, visit brainday.ca



In the know—Exciting updates for Brain Day



programs, but demonstrate higher rates of injury. The kits will provide a much needed resource to these communities. To order Brain Day kits please fill out the form online at brainday.ca or complete the form on the following page. Please read on to page 3 to find out more about Brain Day Teaching Kits.

Kits are available in limited quantities and therefore cannot be provided for everyone who has made a request. Our first priority is to provide kits to communities that do not have access to our current Brain Day sites. For a list of Brain Day sites please refer to page 6. If you would like to have a presenter come to your school please email [admin\[@\]thinkfirst.ca](mailto:admin[@]thinkfirst.ca).

Secondly we're excited to announce that Brain Day sites have popped up in Kamloops, BC, Guelph, ON, and Edmonton, AB. We've been working with the coordinators for these sites and we're excited to pilot the program in the new locations.

Lastly, we've updated the look of the Brain Day activity booklet. The new booklet has a graphic novel look that will make our program even more fun for grade 5 students. The new look will also help reduce the cost per student, this in turn will help us deliver the program to more kids across Canada.

This year's Brain Day has a few new Brain Day modules that can be delivered by teachers who do not have access to our university volunteers. Thanks to generous funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada, we've been able to create Brain Day Teaching Kits. These kits have been designed as self contained areas are not only underserved by our



Brain Day Teaching Kits

As noted in our section on updates, Brain Day Teaching Kits are now available for order. These kits are self contained Brain Day modules, designed to serve communities not being reached by Brain Day. This year, thanks to generous funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada, these kits are available free of charge to grade 5 teachers across Canada. Availability of the kits is limited and as a result not all those who request a kit will receive one.

The priority at ThinkFirst is to provide kits to teachers not currently served by Brain Day sites. For a list of Brain Day sites please see page 6. For more information and to order a kit please fill in the form below or online at brainday.ca.

Brain Day Teacher Kit Contents—What you get when you order a kit:

- 30 Brain Day Student Activity Booklets
- 1 CD ROM with additional information and slide deck.
- 1 Visual 3D Brain Prop for interactive display
- 1 ThinkFirst Folder and Pamphlet
- Evaluation forms: pre and post test surveys
- Helmet Clinic Guide
- Brain Day Experiment Supplies

- 1 Coordinator/Teaching Manual

Order Your Teaching Kit!

Ordering your Brain Day Teaching Kit is pretty simple, but there is some information that we need to collect from you. Please fill out our online form at brainday.ca or fill out the form below and: fax it to 416-603-7795 or scan it to [admin\[@\]thinkfirst.ca](mailto:admin[@]thinkfirst.ca).

First and last name :

School name:

School Address:

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

What grade(s) do you teach?

4 5 6

Language

English French

How did you hear about Brain Day?

BrainWaves Newsletter thinkfirst.ca twitter Facebook referral other _____

Pick our brains about Brain Day: Your most frequently asked questions answered



Q: What is ThinkFirst Brain Day?

A: ThinkFirst Brain Day is launched in March around Brain Awareness Week and delivered by ThinkFirst Canada Chapters and university student volunteers and teachers. It's a fun hands-on half-day program for grade five students that integrates lessons in neuroanatomy and the five senses with brain and spinal cord injury prevention education. Students love the interactive learning of ThinkFirst Brain Day – for half a day, their classrooms become laboratories and students become Sense Explorers!

Q: Why target grade five students?

A: We've found that students at this age are fascinated by the workings of the human body and at a developmental level where they can understand basic neuroanatomy, especially when the material is presented in an engaging way. Grade five is also a crucial age from the injury prevention perspective. Youth are statistically more likely to be injured between the ages of 11-20. This is when youth start participating in sports and recreational activities without adult supervision and begin taking more risks. We want to empower Canada's kids to have fun and stay safe. ThinkFirst Brain Day arms students with the injury prevention information they need to

make smart choices.

Q: Who Teaches ThinkFirst Brain Day?

A: ThinkFirst Canada strives to make our educational programs fun and relevant. With ThinkFirst Brain Day, we've found the passion of our presenters is contagious - students really immerse themselves in the program. We don't want this to be a regular day at school for these grade fivers. As such we train our university/ ThinkFirst Chapter volunteer presenters to provide a fun day of learning!

Q: Has ThinkFirst Brain Day been evaluated?

A: Yes, with very favourable results. An evaluation done in 2007 by York University researchers confirmed significant knowledge increases for students who completed the ThinkFirst Brain Day program, with notable improvements to knowledge in the area of helmet durability, brain injury and helmet maintenance. The program has also been overwhelmingly praised by the teachers, students and presenters involved in ThinkFirst Brain Day.

Q: How many students do you reach each year?

A: We piloted the program to a classroom of 30 in 2004 and have been growing Brain Day across Canada ever since. In 2009 we reached over 10,000 students in more than 200 classrooms in 9 cities across Canada, thanks to our 360 volunteers from universities, our Chapters and public health agencies. In 2010 we reached over 13,000 students

in more than 300 classrooms thanks to our 1029 volunteers.

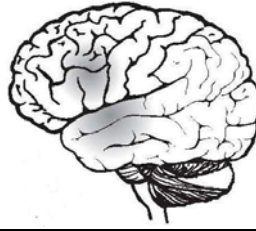
Q: What are your plans for the program in the future?

A: ThinkFirst Canada's goal is to reach every grade five classroom in Canada with ThinkFirst Brain Day. We are working hard to reach this goal by building capacity across the country: recruiting volunteers, increasing outreach efforts, and enhancing training programs. Many universities are incorporating "Brain Day" positions into their student government structures, and training their successors in program organization and delivery – with lots of support from ThinkFirst! This year we're excited to be piloting self contained Brain Day Teacher's Kits to be distributed to teachers who are currently not being served by the Brain Day Program. ThinkFirst Canada is committed to a reduction in the incidence and burden of childhood injury in Canada, and we think ThinkFirst Brain Day is one of the best ways to achieve this!

Q: How can I get Brain Day in my classroom?

A: If you are in a city that has a Brain Day site please email Deirdre@thinkfirst.ca to request a volunteer presenter to come to your classroom. If you are in a rural or geographically isolated area, you may be eligible to order the Brain Day Teacher's Kit. Kits are available in limited quantities. To order a kit please fill out the form online at brainday.ca or complete the form on the previous page.

Increase Your Brain Power



half of these deaths are from brain injury

Did you know?

- 93% of teachers who received the Brain Day program in 2010 indicated that they would recommend the program to their colleagues
- Over 13,000 students received Brain Days in 2010. That's an increase of over 30% compared to the previous year.
- Brain Day 2010 was delivered to 522 classrooms across Canada by more than 1000 volunteers.
- Brain Day was developed to teach kids how to use their body to protect their brains.
- Injury is the leading killer of Canadian children and youth. More than
- The best defense against brain injury is prevention. For safe sport tips visit thinkfirst.ca before you play.
- Researchers estimate that as many as 90% of all injuries are preventable and predictable.
- When worn properly, bike helmets can prevent up to 88% of head injuries in cyclists.
- It is estimated that each dollar invested in a helmet saves 30\$ in costs to our society.





Canada



Brain Day Sites 2010
Brain Day Sites 2011

Since its promising beginning in Toronto in 2004, ThinkFirst Brain Day has grown to include programs in 8 provinces across Canada, and 16 cities. To date, we've turned over 21,000 elementary students into certified Brainiacs! If you are a teacher, principal, or parent in one of our current Brain Day cities, and you would like to request a Brain Day presentation for your classroom of grade 4, 5, or 6 students, simply send an email to the Brain Day Program Coordinator at: [admin\[@\]thinkfirst.ca](mailto:admin[@]thinkfirst.ca).

We'll connect you with information to help with the future Brainiacs in your life! ThinkFirst Brain Day 2011 is planned for 16 Canadian cities, across seven provinces, shown above and listed to the right.

Brain Day 2011 Locations

- Vancouver, British Columbia
- Kamloops, British Columbia
- Calgary, Alberta
- Edmonton, Alberta
- Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
- Winnipeg, Manitoba
- North Bay, Ontario
- Winsor, Ontario
- Hamilton, Ontario
- London, Ontario
- Guelph, Ontario
- Toronto, Ontario
- Kingston, Ontario
- Ottawa, Ontario
- Moncton, New Brunswick
- Halifax, Nova Scotia

The Brains Behind Brain Day

ThinkFirst Brain Day wouldn't be possible without dedicated injury preventionists across the country. ThinkFirst thanks its volunteer coordinators as well as Chapter leaders who train hundreds of volunteers each year. Brain Day's success continues each year because teachers, coordinators, and volunteers recognize the value of injury prevention in the lives

of Canadian children and youth.

ThinkFirst National Staff:

Greer Brabazon, Assistant Program Coordinator

Deirdre Dimitroff, National Program Coordinator

Rebecca Nesdale-Tucker, Executive Director

Samantha Sagar, Assistant National Office Coordinator

Paula Tymchyshyn, National Program Coordinator

Amy Wang, Bookkeeper

The gelatin brain is a great prop to use with students of all ages. This mold creates a lifelike brain with the texture and colour of the real thing!

Ingredients:

- Vegetable oil to grease the plastic mold
 - 2 170g boxes of watermelon or peach gelatin (these flavours provide the most realistic colour)
 - 266ml can of evaporated skimmed milk (*please do not substitute other types of milk.*)
- A few drops of food colouring

Recipe:

Before each use, wash the brain mold with warm soapy water and a soft cloth or sponge.

Apply a small amount of vegetable oil inside the entire cavity of the plastic mold; then wipe out any excess.

Put flavoured gelatin in a mixing bowl and add the boiling water. Stir until dissolved.

Stir in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cold water.

Stir in evaporated skimmed milk. Stir for 2 minutes (include a few drops of food colouring here, if desired).

The colour of the brain depends on the gelatin flavour you use and whether or not you want to add food colouring. To obtain a brain-ish pink tone use watermelon flavoured gelatin and a few drops of green food colouring.

Pour mixture into mold and refrigerate overnight.

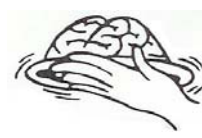
Tips for a Perfect Gelatin Brain:

- Place the mold inside a bowl in the refrigerator for best results
- Transport the brain in its mold to your presentation
- To extract the brain from the plastic, gently shake it facing up, then facing down
- Don't forget to place it on a plate—the gelatin should pop right out!

Here are some other resources available for purchase:

- Smart Hockey DVD
- A Little Respect DVD
- Smart Soccer Booklet (bilingual)
- Egg Helmets
- Gelatin Brain Mold
- 2V1 Helmet Fitting Cards (French or English available)
- Which Helmet for Which Activity (bilingual)
- Post Cards – "Think about all that goes into a helmet"
- Stickers
- Waterless Tattoos
- Medium posters (12" x 18")
- Large posters (18" x 24")

To order a brain mold or any of our other resources, please visit thinkfirst.ca.



Thank you to all of our
donors, supporters,
participants, partners and
volunteers who have
contributed to making Canada a safer place
through Brain Day and injury prevention.



Special Thanks to our Brain Day Supporters:

Public Health Agency of Canada

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Krembil Foundation

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