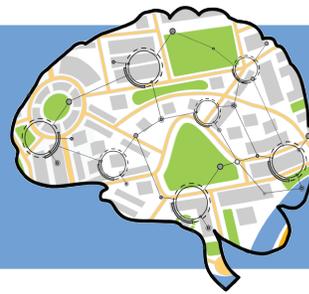
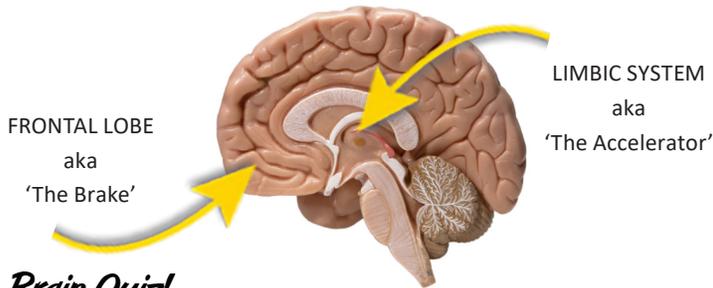


# Risky Behavior & the Brain

## Activity Guide Grade 6-12



# Know Your Neuro

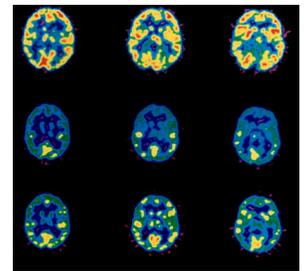
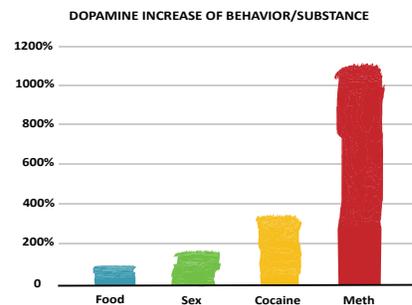


### Brain Quiz!

1. What part of the brain is in charge of the accelerator?  
Answer: The Limbic System
2. What part of the brain is the thinking part?  
Answer: The Frontal Lobe
3. What is the brain's rule?  
Answer: Use It or Lose It
4. When does the Limbic System and the Frontal Lobe mature?  
Answer: Age 11/12 for Limbic and age 24/25 for Frontal Lobe
5. What is the chemical our brain makes that increases when we do good things for our survival? Answer: Dopamine

### How Does the Brain Get Hijacked?

Dopamine is a chemical our brain makes to help us know what to do for our survival. For example, when we get hungry dopamine decreases. Our brain is telling us that we need to do something. When we eat, our brain makes us feel calm and happy by increasing dopamine. Risky behavior, like drugs, hijacks this system by causing dopamine to spike too high. This also causes the frontal lobe to shut down resulting in arrested development.



## Discussion Questions & Facts

### Discussion

- If your accelerator develops before your brakes, how might this affect your decisions regarding risky behaviors?
- What risky behavior have you been tempted to engage in?
- Do you know anyone who has engaged in risky behavior? How has their decisions affected them?
- How do your friends influence you regarding engaging in risky behavior? Do your peers influence you not to or to do things that may have negative consequences?
- What are your family's rules about drugs, alcohol, bullying, technology overuse, and other risky behaviors?
- What is your own code of ethics about risky behavior?

### POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

- Social influence can be both positive and/or negative. Pressuring others either directly or indirectly to engage in a negative or potentially negative behavior is using negative peer influence. Encouraging others to refrain from risky behavior and engage in positive activities is exerting positive influence.
- What type of influence do you use with peers? Positive? Negative?
  - When do you use positive peer pressure? When do you use negative peer pressure?
  - How do you handle it when someone tries to negatively pressure you into doing something risky?
  - What kind of influencer do you want to be?

### Refusal Skills

- Take on the role of a student who encourages or entices others to engage in risky behavior and challenge students to devise refusal skills scripts to use in each scenario below:
- Do you want to try a beer?
  - Let's take someone's lunch so they can't find it!
  - Wanna go skateboard off a high wall?
  - Let's see how far we can climb up this tree?
  - Just run across the road! You don't have to look both ways!
  - I brought my brother's vape today. Want to try it with me in the school bathroom?
  - Everybody is smoking marijuana. Let's try it!
  - My parents won't know if we play this game. Let's do it.
  - Take a look at this nude picture!