

The Human Body: You've Got Some Nerve!

by ReadWorks

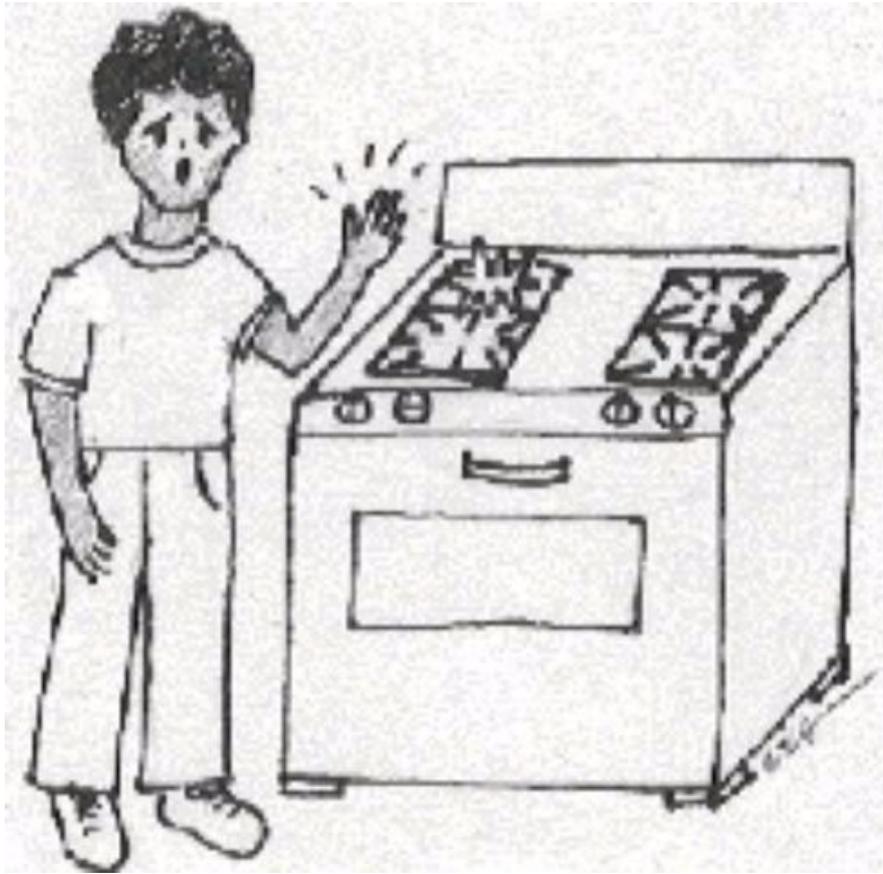


Illustration by Lynn M. Hanousek

How can you tell if something is hot or cold? You touch it. There are things in your fingers that help you to know if something is hot or if something is cold. They're called **nerves**. You have them all over your body. Nerves react to things we touch and send a message through our bodies to our brains, telling us how something feels.

If you touched the edge of a knife, how would that feel? It would hurt. If you didn't have nerves, you would still bleed, but it wouldn't hurt. You wouldn't be able to feel it. So, why are nerves a good thing? We would hurt ourselves a lot more without them.

Imagine that you're making a snack in the kitchen. You lean your hand down on the stove. After a minute or two, you notice some smoke rising in the air. It's your hand! It's burning! If you had no nerves, you wouldn't be able to feel the heat from the stove. Then you would have to go to the hospital.

If we had no nerves, the weather wouldn't affect us, or would it? If it were below 40 degrees, you wouldn't feel how cold it was. But if you went outside without protecting your body from the cold, you could get very sick or die. Nerves help us stay safe and healthy.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Nerves send messages to

- A. your brain.
- B. your skin.
- C. your muscles.
- D. your hands.

2. The author would most likely describe nerves as

- A. part of your attitude.
- B. the most important part of your skin.
- C. something in our body that helps us feel things.
- D. being able to feel when something is very hot or very cold.

3. If you stepped on a nail without having nerves

- A. nothing would happen.
- B. you would feel the pain in your foot.
- C. you would not feel pain in your foot.
- D. Your body would make new nerves.

4. Read the following sentence: "If we had no nerves, the weather wouldn't affect us, or would it?"

The word affect most nearly means

- A. a result of something.
- B. to cause a change in some way.
- C. to send a message to the brain.
- D. to react to a hot or cold feeling.

5. This passage is mainly about

- A. how not to burn your hand in the kitchen.
- B. how the brain works.
- C. how nerves keep us safe and healthy.
- D. how nerves help us when we go outside.

6. Why is it important for our nerves to be functioning?

7. What do nerves do besides help protect us from hot and cold?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

If you didn't have nerves, you would not feel pain _____ if you were injured or hurt.

- A. so
- B. after
- C. because
- D. even

9. **Vocabulary Word:** imagine: to create a mental picture or belief in your mind.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence:

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- B. your skin.
- C. your muscles.
- D. your hands.

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- A. how not to burn your hand in the kitchen.
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- C. **how nerves keep us safe and healthy.**
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6. Why is it important for our nerves to be functioning?

Our nerves need to function because they warn us when we are feeling pain, thus helping us avoid injuries.

7. What do nerves do besides help protect us from hot and cold?

Answer will vary, but students should point out that nerves can help us learn about things by touching them, and that nerves are important for the sense of touch beyond just hot and cold.

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