

Professor Pangolin's Brain Bumpers

www.yesmag.ca/brain



What animal sleeps the most hours per day?

Well, we pangolins sleep about 18 hours a day. It's amazing I have the time to answer all your questions. When you guys were babies, you slept a good 16 hours a day — and cried the other eight! That's what your parents say, but I don't believe them for a second.

Let's start with an animal that hardly ever gets any shut eye, the giraffe. Giraffes sleep deeply only about five to 10 minutes at a time — for a total of 1.9 hours per day. Ack! That would drive me bananas.

Now for the truly admirable animal that knows the value of a good snooze. Drum roll, please ... the brown bat. This cute little mammal sleeps for 19.9 hours a day, or 82.9 percent of the time. Bats have to conserve their energy so they can hunt. Do you have any idea how hard it is to hunt insects? Or rodents? By the way, chasing scurrying creatures wears pythons out. While they don't always sleep this long, they can sleep for 20 hours after feeding. Koalas, too, have been known to sleep as much as 20 hours after a good nosh.

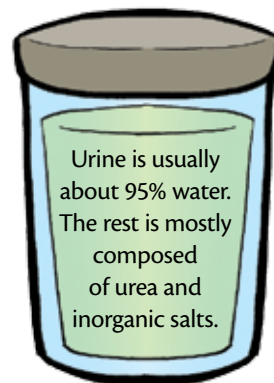
Wow! Imagine being awake for only one-sixth of your life. That's, uh, really living it up.

Why is pee sometimes yellow and sometimes clear?

Urine — let's use the mature form of the word, people — has a long and colourful history. Tobacco for Cuban cigars was soaked in urine. It was used in the dye process. And it's still used in some places as a plant fertilizer.

The yellow colour of urine comes from a chemical — bilirubin — in your liver. Bilirubins form when red blood cells die. The bilirubins break down further into urobilins, which you get rid of by peeing them away. The lighter the yellow, the more water you have in your urine. Dark yellow urine usually means you're dehydrated. Vitamins and medications, however, can turn urine yellow.

By the way, and one of you is bound to ask this question, bilirubin is the reason your poo is brown. Once bilirubin lands in the gut, your intestinal bacteria go to work and change it into brown-coloured stercobilinogen. Learning is such an eye-opening experience, isn't it?



Entries

Send your Comic Captions and Brain Bumpers answers to:

YES Mag
501-3960 Quadra St
Victoria, BC
V8X 4A3

or email:
contests@yesmag.ca

Don't forget to include your name, age, address, and t-shirt size (Youth S or M, Adult S, M, or L).

Entries must be received by:

June 2nd

Want to win a cool YES Mag t-shirt and a book from Kids Can Press? All you have to do is answer one or both of our Brain Bumpers. Everyone with a correct answer goes in the draw. Feel free to look up the answer or ask a parent, teacher, or friend.

Got your own burning question? Email it to prof@yesmag.ca. If we print your question, you win a t-shirt ... just like Geoffrey Laidlaw Manson, who suggested next issue's turtle question.

Next Issue's Questions
Do turtles have vocal chords?
What is synesthesia?

YES MAG 31
May/June 2006