Doctors are great – as long as you don't need them.
*Edward E. Rosenbaum, doctor, professor and author*

# 2A Call the doctor?

## 1 READING

a Read the article. Complete it with the missing sentences. There is one sentence you don't need to use.

**A** Making an effort to focus on the page means that we blink less often.

**B** Each of its functions happens in a particular area, and different regions are used for different tasks.

**C** This is because the flow of blood to the brain decreases while the body digests it.

**D** Furthermore, existing studies suggest that adequate fluid intake is usually met through our daily consumption of juice, milk and caffeinated drinks.

**E** When the dead part above the surface of the skin is removed the living section underneath is not affected.

b Read the text again. Mark the sentences **T** (true) or **F** (false)

1 Doctors spend a lot of time investigating myths. F
2 At the beginning of the 1900s, people believed that we only used a small part of our brains. ___
3 Unshaven hair is exactly the same colour as hair under the surface of the skin. ___
4 In the past, people's eyesight was worse because they read by candlelight. ___
5 Turkey contains less tryptophan than cheese. ___

c Look at the **highlighted** words and phrases. What do you think they mean? Use your dictionary to look up their meaning and pronunciation.

# Medical myths

Good doctors are always learning new things, but very few of them question existing medical myths. The British Medical Journal recently examined the most common of these to see if there is any evidence that they are true. This is what they discovered.

**Myth: We only use about 10% of our brains**

This myth appeared in the early twentieth century, when the concept of self-improvement was born. The idea was that there are many abilities built into our brains, but if we do not develop them, we never learn how to do them. This led to the belief that there are parts of our brains that we do not use. However, scientific evidence shows that this is not the case. Brain scans have revealed that there is no area of the brain that is silent or inactive. [1]____ Nobody who has examined the brain has been able to identify the 90% that we, supposedly, do not use.

**Myth: Shaving hair causes it to grow back thicker**

This belief is often reinforced by the media, despite the fact that a clinical trial in 1928 showed that shaving has no effect on hair growth. [2]____ This makes it unlikely for the hair to grow back any different than it was before. The reason it appears thicker is that recently shaved hair lacks the finer point seen at the ends of unshaven hair. In addition to this, the new hair has not been lightened by the sun, which makes it look darker than the hair that has already grown.

**Myth: Reading in insufficient light ruins your eyesight**

People tend to believe this because of the discomfort they experience when they have been reading for a while in dim light. [3]____ This causes our eyes to dry out and feel uncomfortable. Fortunately, the effect is only temporary and most ophthalmologists* agree that it doesn't damage our eyes permanently. Something else that disproves the myth is that there are more short-sighted people today than in the past, when reading conditions were worse. Before the invention of electricity, people relied on candles or lanterns to read, yet fewer people needed glasses.

*ophthalmologists – Doctors who specialise in eyes

**Myth: Eating turkey makes people feel especially tired**

Some foods contain a natural chemical called tryptophan, which is known to cause drowsiness. The myth is the idea that consuming turkey (and the tryptophan it contains) might make someone more likely to fall asleep. Actually, both chicken and minced beef have nearly the same amount of tryptophan as turkey; other foods, such as pork or cheese, contain even more. The truth is that any large, solid meal can make you feel sleepy, whether it contains turkey or not. [4]____ It isn't the turkey in your roast dinner that sends you to sleep; it is the quantity of food that you have eaten.



LIVEWORKSHEETS

## 2 **VOCABULARY** illness and treatment

**a** Complete the sentences with a verb from the box.

be sick burn choke ~~cough~~ cut faint hurt sneeze

1 The smoke from the fire made everybody *cough*.
2 I'm feeling a bit dizzy. I think I'm going to _____.
3 I'm allergic to cats. They make me _____.
4 Be careful! You'll _____ your back if you try to lift up that wardrobe.
5 That knife is very sharp. Please don't _____ yourself.
6 I'm not feeling well. I think I'm going to _____.
7 Be careful! You might _____ yourself. The oven's really hot.
8 Some people don't like eating fish because they're worried that they'll _____ on the fish bones.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

**b** Complete the dialogues between the patients and the doctor.

**b** Complete the email with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Use the present perfect simple or continuous.

Dear Sabine,

Sorry I [1] *haven't written* (not write) for ages, but I [2] _____ (have) a lot of work recently and I [3] _____ (be) too exhausted to do anything in the evenings once I get home. Today is a bank holiday though, so I [4] _____ (write) emails all day to try to catch up with all my friends.

Guess what! I [5] _____ (move out) of my parents' house! I [6] _____ (live) in my new flat for a week now, and I love it! I [7] _____ (already / unpack) all my things and it's beginning to feel like home. You must come and visit!

The bad news is that I [8] _____ (split up) with Sebastian. He [9] _____ (travel) so much recently that we [10] _____ (not manage) to see each other much and I [11] _____ (meet) someone else. He's called Carl and he's a colleague from work. We [12] _____ (see) each other since the beginning of the summer. We [13] _____ (have) three dates so far and I really like him!

Anyway, must go. Please write soon and tell me all your news.
Love
Sophie

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1 **P** I've got a temperature and my body aches.
**D** I think you've got *flu*.

2 **P** I'm tired and I've got no energy.
**D** It sounds like you have low
bl_____ pr_____.

3 **P** There's a rash all over my body.
**D** You've probably had an a_____ r_____
to something.

4 **P** I hurt my wrist playing tennis and it's very swollen.
**D** You might have spr_____ it.

5 **P** It hurts when I talk and when I eat.
**D** You've got a s_____ thr_____.

6 **P** I've been sick and I've got diarrhoea.
**D** I think you have f_____ p_____.

LIVEWORKSHEETS