

# BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium

**Serum-free neurophysiological basal medium for improved neuronal function**



Scientists Helping Scientists™ | [WWW.STEMCELL.COM](http://WWW.STEMCELL.COM)

TOLL FREE PHONE 1 800 667 0322 • PHONE +1 604 877 0713

[INFO@STEMCELL.COM](mailto:INFO@STEMCELL.COM) • [TECHSUPPORT@STEMCELL.COM](mailto:TECHSUPPORT@STEMCELL.COM)

FOR GLOBAL CONTACT DETAILS VISIT OUR WEBSITE

## Product Description

BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium is a defined and serum-free neuronal basal medium. BrainPhys™ may be used to culture primary tissue-derived neurons or human pluripotent stem cell (hPSC)-derived neurons. Based on the formulation published by Bardy et al.<sup>1</sup>, BrainPhys™ is more representative of the central nervous system (CNS) extracellular environment and increases the proportion of synaptically active neurons.

The formulation contains reduced levels of neuroactive compounds compared to standard media (KCl, CaCl<sub>2</sub>, MgCl<sub>2</sub>, Fe(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, CuSO<sub>4</sub>, FeSO<sub>4</sub>, glycine, L-alanine, L-aspartic acid, L-glutamic acid, and L-serine). The glucose levels are at similar physiological levels to human cerebral spinal fluid (2.5 mM), and further energetic substrates are provided by sodium pyruvate (0.5 mM). The buffering system is composed of HEPES (5 mM) and sodium bicarbonate (29 mM). Key metabolites are present, including methionine (< 0.2 mM), lysine (< 0.8 mM), arginine (< 0.5 mM), and folate (< 0.006 mM). To request custom BrainPhys™ formulations, contact us at [info@stemcell.com](mailto:info@stemcell.com).

## Ordering Information

PRODUCT NAME	CATALOG #	SIZE	KIT COMPONENTS
BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium	05790	500 mL	Not applicable.
BrainPhys™ Without Phenol Red	05791	500 mL	Not applicable.
NeuroCult™ Neuronal Plating Medium	05713	100 mL	Not applicable.
BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium and SM1 Kit	05792	1 Kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium</li><li>NeuroCult™ SM1 Neuronal Supplement</li></ul>
BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium N2-A & SM1 Kit	05793	1 Kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium</li><li>NeuroCult™ SM1 Neuronal Supplement</li><li>N2 Supplement-A</li></ul>
BrainPhys™ Primary Neuron Kit	05794	1 Kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium</li><li>NeuroCult™ SM1 Neuronal Supplement</li><li>NeuroCult™ Neuronal Plating Medium</li></ul>
BrainPhys™ hPSC Neuron Kit	05795	1 Kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium</li><li>NeuroCult™ SM1 Neuronal Supplement</li><li>N2 Supplement-A</li><li>Human Recombinant BDNF</li><li>Human Recombinant GDNF</li></ul>

## Storage and Stability

PRODUCT NAME	CATALOG #	SIZE	STORAGE	SHELF LIFE
BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium*	05790	500 mL	Store at 2 - 8°C.	Stable for 2 years from date of manufacture (MFG) on label.
BrainPhys™ Without Phenol Red*	05791	500 mL	Store at 2 - 8°C.	Stable for 2 years from date of manufacture (MFG) on label.

\*Protect from light.

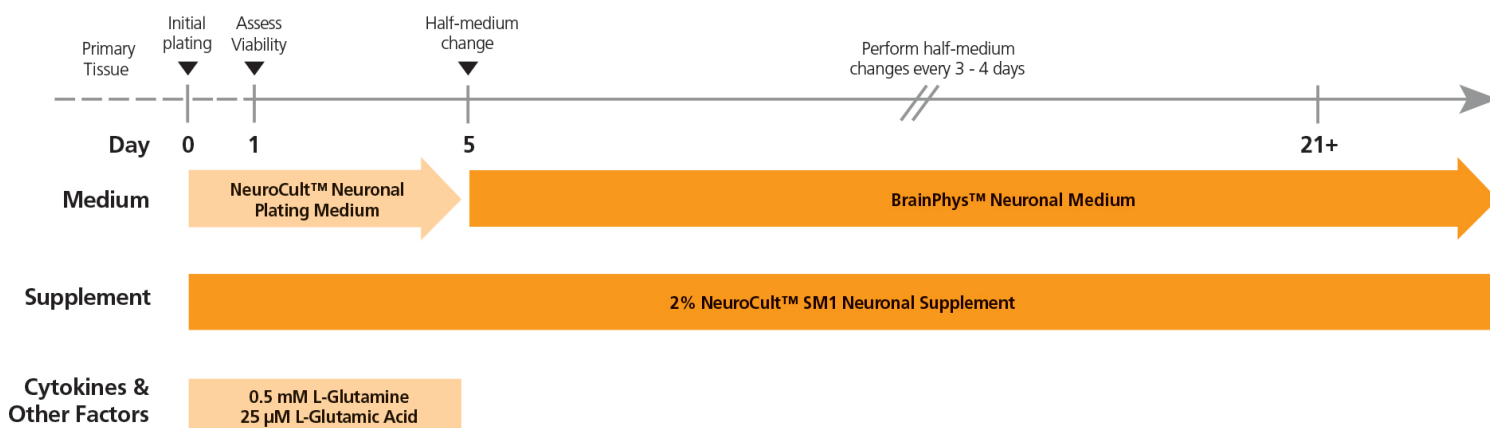
NOTE: These products may be shipped with ice packs or under ambient conditions. Store at 2 - 8°C upon receipt.

## Directions for Use

Protocols are provided below for A: Culture of Primary Tissue-Derived Neurons and B: Neuronal Differentiation of hPSC-Derived Neural Progenitor Cells. Select the appropriate protocol for your cell type.

### A. CULTURE OF PRIMARY TISSUE-DERIVED NEURONS

#### Protocol Diagram



Please read the entire protocol before proceeding.

#### Preparation of Poly-D-Lysine (PDL)-Coated Culture Surface

NOTE: Cells can be cultured on tissue culture-treated plasticware or on glass coverslips.

- Dissolve 5 mg of PDL in 50 mL of sterile water to obtain a 100 μg/mL stock solution.  
NOTE: Do not prepare the PDL solution with borate buffer. Increased cell clumping is observed when the PDL solution is prepared in borate buffer, and then cells are cultured in medium supplemented with NeuroCult™ SM1.  
NOTE: If not used immediately, aliquot PDL stock solution into polypropylene vials and store at 2 - 8°C for up to 1 month.
- Coat culture wells or glass coverslips with PDL as described below:

##### Coating Culture Wells

- Dilute the 100 μg/mL PDL stock solution (prepared in step 1) with sterile water to 10 μg/mL.
- Dispense 0.5 mL of 10 μg/mL PDL into each well of a 24-well plate.
- Proceed to step 3.

##### Coating Glass Coverslips

- Use sterile forceps to place a sterile round glass coverslip in each well of a 24-well plate.
- Dilute the 100 μg/mL PDL stock solution (prepared in step 1) with sterile water to 40 μg/mL.
- Dispense 0.5 mL of 40 μg/mL PDL into each well of the plate prepared in step a.

NOTE: Ensure that the coverslips are completely submerged in the PDL solution, as they tend to float. If this happens, use a sterile plastic pipette tip to push the coverslip to the bottom of the well.

- Proceed to step 3.
- Incubate at room temperature (15 - 25°C) for 2 hours, or wrap the plate with Parafilm® and incubate overnight at 2 - 8°C.
- Wash each well with 2 x 1 mL of sterile phosphate-buffered saline (PBS), leaving PBS in the wells.  
NOTE: DMEM/F-12 with 15 mM HEPES (Catalog #36254) can also be used for washes.  
NOTE: If not used immediately, wrap the plate with Parafilm® and store at 2 - 8°C for up to 2 weeks.
- When ready to plate the cells, remove the PBS (or DMEM/F-12) from the wells. Do not allow the coated coverslips or wells to completely dry.

## Preparation of Media

NOTE: BrainPhys™ Without Phenol Red may be used in place of BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium in the protocols below.

### Complete Plating Medium

Use sterile technique to prepare Complete Plating Medium (NeuroCult™ Neuronal Plating Medium [Catalog #05713] + NeuroCult™ SM1 Neuronal Supplement [Catalog #05711] + L-Glutamine + L-glutamic acid). The following example is for preparing 10 mL of complete medium. If preparing other volumes, adjust accordingly.

1. Thaw one bottle of NeuroCult™ SM1 at room temperature (15 - 25°C) for 1 hour.  
NOTE: If not used immediately, aliquot and store at -20°C. Do not exceed the expiry date as indicated on the label.
2. Add 0.2 mL of NeuroCult™ SM1 to 9.8 mL of NeuroCult™ Neuronal Plating Medium (1 in 50 dilution).
3. Add the following supplements and mix thoroughly:
  - 25 µL of 200 mM L-Glutamine (Catalog #07100)
  - 18.5 µL of 2 mg/mL L-glutamic Acid

NOTE: If not used immediately, store Complete Plating Medium at 2 - 8°C for up to 1 month.

### Complete Maturation Medium

Use sterile technique to prepare Complete Maturation Medium (BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium + NeuroCult™ SM1 Neuronal Supplement [Catalog #05711]). The following example is for preparing 10 mL of complete medium. If preparing other volumes, adjust accordingly.

1. Thaw one bottle of NeuroCult™ SM1 at room temperature (15 - 25°C) for 1 hour.  
NOTE: If not used immediately, aliquot and store at -20°C. Do not exceed the expiry date as indicated on the label.
2. Add 0.2 mL of NeuroCult™ SM1 to 9.8 mL of BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium (1 in 50 dilution). Mix thoroughly.  
NOTE: If not used immediately, store Complete Maturation Medium at 2 - 8°C for up to 1 month. Protect from light.

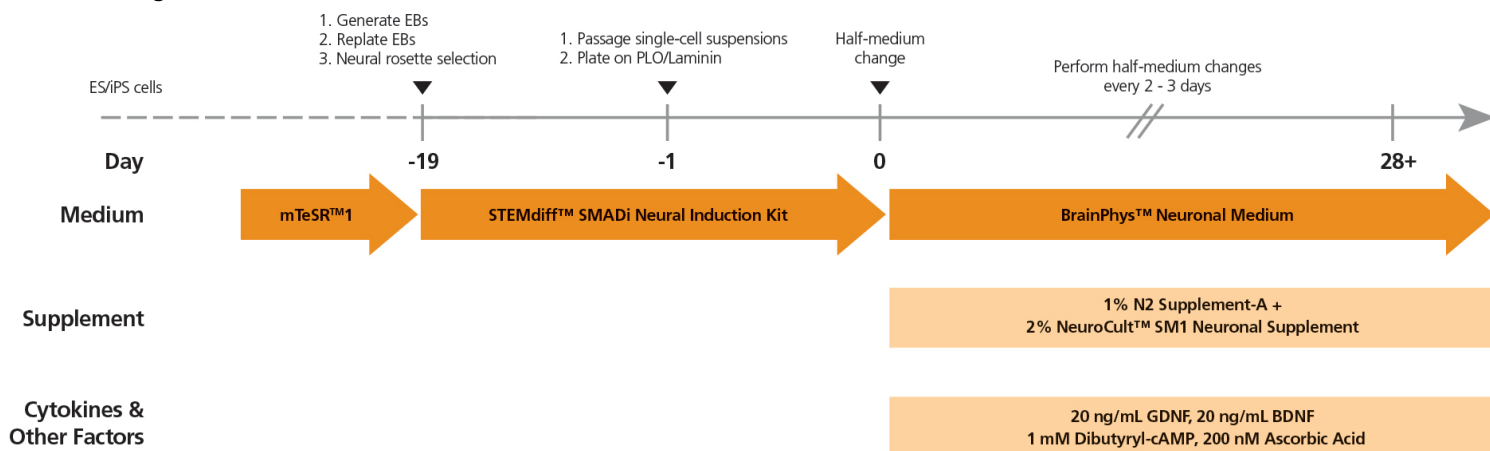
## Culture of Primary Tissue-Derived Neurons

Indicated volumes are for a single well of a 24-well plate. If using other cultureware, adjust volumes accordingly.

1. Resuspend cells with Complete Plating Medium (see Preparation of Media) to obtain a final concentration of  $3.9 \times 10^6$  cells/mL.
2. The cell density may be adjusted for different applications, as follows:  
**For immunocytochemistry applications**, plate cells at  $3.2 \times 10^4$  cells/cm<sup>2</sup>; add 20 µL cell suspension to each 1.3 mL of Complete Plating Medium.  
OR  
**For electrophysiology applications**, plate cells at  $4.8 \times 10^4$  cells/cm<sup>2</sup>; add 30 µL cell suspension to each 1.3 mL of Complete Plating Medium.
3. Using a pipettor set at 1 mL, mix the cells gently. Add 1 mL of the cell suspension to a PDL-coated well (or a well containing a PDL-coated coverslip) of a 24-well plate.
4. **Day 0:** Incubate cultures at 37°C and 5% CO<sub>2</sub>.
5. **Day 1:** Observe the cells to determine whether the cultures are viable; cells should be attached and minimal cell debris should be visible.
6. **Day 5:** Remove half of the plating medium (~ 0.5 mL) from each well. Replenish with the same volume of fresh Complete Maturation Medium (see Preparation of Media).
7. For extended culture periods, perform a half-medium change (as described in step 6) every 3 - 4 days for the remainder of the culture period. Neurons have been cultured for up to 21 days using this protocol.
8. Upon reaching the end of the desired culture period, cells can be processed for immunocytochemistry or other applications.

## B. NEURONAL DIFFERENTIATION OF hPSC-DERIVED NEURAL PROGENITOR CELLS

## Protocol Diagram



Please read the entire protocol before proceeding.

## Preparation of Poly-L-Ornithine (PLO)/Laminin-Coated Culture Surface

NOTE: Cells can be cultured on tissue culture-treated plasticware or on glass coverslips.

1. If culturing cells on coverslips, use sterile forceps to place a sterile round glass coverslip at the bottom of an individual well of a 24-well plate.
2. Dilute 0.01% PLO solution (Sigma Catalog #P4957) with phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) to give a final concentration of 15 µg/mL.
3. Dispense 0.5 mL of 15 µg/mL PLO solution into each well of a 24-well plate that will be used for culturing.

NOTE: If using coverslips, ensure that the coverslips are completely submerged in the PLO solution, as the coverslips tend to float. If this happens, use a sterile plastic disposable pipette tip to push the coverslip to the bottom of the well.

4. Incubate at room temperature (15 - 25°C) for 2 hours, or wrap the plate with Parafilm® and incubate overnight at 2 - 8°C.
5. Dilute 1 mg/mL laminin stock solution (Sigma Catalog #L2020) with sterile PBS (or DMEM/F-12) to a final concentration of 10 µg/mL.
6. After incubation, wash each well with 2 x 1 mL of sterile PBS. Remove as much of the PBS as possible from the wells.
7. Dispense 0.5 mL of 10 µg/mL laminin into each well.
8. Incubate at room temperature for 2 hours, or wrap the plate with Parafilm® and incubate overnight at 2 - 8°C.
9. Wash each well with 2 x 1 mL of sterile PBS, leaving PBS in the wells.

NOTE: DMEM/F-12 with 15 mM HEPES (Catalog #36254) can also be used for washes.

NOTE: If not used immediately, wrap the plate with Parafilm® and store at 2 - 8°C for up to 2 weeks.

10. When ready to plate the cells, remove the PBS (or DMEM/F-12) from the wells. Do not allow the coated coverslips or wells to completely dry.

## Preparation of Complete Differentiation Medium

NOTE: BrainPhys™ Without Phenol Red may be used in place of BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium in the protocols below.

Use sterile technique to prepare Complete Differentiation Medium (BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium + supplements). The following example is for preparing 10 mL of complete medium. If preparing other volumes, adjust accordingly.

1. Add the following supplements to 10 mL of BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium:
  - 200 µL NeuroCult™ SM1 Neuronal Supplement (Catalog #05711)
  - 100 µL N2 Supplement-A (Catalog #07152)
  - 2 µL of 100 µg/mL Human Recombinant BDNF (Catalog #78005; final concentration 20 ng/mL)
  - 2 µL of 100 µg/mL Human Recombinant GDNF (Catalog #78058; final concentration 20 ng/mL)
  - 50 µL of 100 mg/mL Dibutyryl-cAMP (Catalog #73882; final concentration 1 mM)
  - 7 µL of 50 µg/mL Ascorbic Acid (Catalog #72132; final concentration 200 nM)
2. Mix thoroughly.

NOTE: If not used immediately, store Complete Differentiation Medium at 2 - 8°C for up to 2 weeks. Protect from light.

## Neuronal Differentiation

BrainPhys™ Neuronal Medium is compatible with neural progenitor cells (NPCs) generated using several methods, including with STEMdiff™ Neural Induction Medium (Catalog #05835).

Indicated volumes are for a single well of a 24-well plate. If using other cultureware, adjust volumes accordingly.

1. Seed cells onto PLO/laminin-coated dishes at a density of  $1.5 \times 10^4$  -  $6 \times 10^4$  cells/cm<sup>2</sup> in 0.5 mL of the medium in which the cells were maintained. Distribute cells evenly. Incubate at 37°C and 5% CO<sub>2</sub>.

**NOTE: The seeding density of cells should be optimized for the application and the cell line.** For long-term cultures (> 30 days of maturation) and for immunocytochemistry, seed cells at  $1.5 \times 10^4$  -  $3 \times 10^4$  cells/cm<sup>2</sup>. For short-term cultures (< 30 days of maturation), seed cells at  $4 \times 10^4$  -  $6 \times 10^4$  cells/cm<sup>2</sup>.

2. The next day, add 0.5 mL of Complete Differentiation Medium to the existing culture medium. Incubate at 37°C and 5% CO<sub>2</sub>.
3. Perform a half-medium change every 2 - 3 days as follows:
  - a. Remove half of the culture medium (~0.5 mL).
  - b. Add 0.5 mL of fresh Complete Differentiation Medium.
4. Continue to incubate cells at 37°C and 5% CO<sub>2</sub> for 2 - 4 weeks, performing a half-medium change (as described in step 3) every 2 - 3 days, until cells begin to differentiate and neuronal morphology becomes apparent.
5. Analyze for neuronal differentiation using markers such as beta-tubulin III (e.g. using Anti-Beta-Tubulin III Antibody, Clone TUJ1 [Catalog #60052]), MAP2, and synapsin1.

**NOTE:** For further maturation of NPCs, continue to culture in Complete Differentiation Medium, performing half-medium changes every 2 - 3 days.

## References

1. Bardy C et al. (2015) Neuronal medium that supports basic synaptic functions and activity of human neurons in vitro. Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 112(20):E2725–34.

PRODUCTS ARE FOR RESEARCH USE ONLY AND NOT INTENDED FOR HUMAN OR ANIMAL DIAGNOSTIC OR THERAPEUTIC USES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON QUALITY AT STEMCELL, REFER TO [WWW.STEMCELL.COM/COMPLIANCE](http://WWW.STEMCELL.COM/COMPLIANCE).

Copyright © 2022 by STEMCELL Technologies Inc. All rights reserved including graphics and images. STEMCELL Technologies & Design, STEMCELL Shield Design, Scientists Helping Scientists, NeuroCult, and STEMdiff are trademarks of STEMCELL Technologies Canada Inc. Parafilm is a registered trademark of Bemis Company, Inc. BrainPhys is a registered trademark of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, used under exclusive license. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders. While STEMCELL has made all reasonable efforts to ensure that the information provided by STEMCELL and its suppliers is correct, it makes no warranties or representations as to the accuracy or completeness of such information.