HAPPY HOLIDAYS
From your friends at PMPU

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INTERNATIONAL MEDICINE

Zika No Longer Global Health Emergency, WHO declares

Zika virus first started making headlines back in February when WHO declared it a public
health emergency. Since then, local mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission has been reported in the continental United States as well as outbreaks occurring in multiple other countries and in three US territories. Most notably is Miami, Florida. Miami is home to the mosquito species that transmits Zika virus. Since July, Miami has declared several outbreaks of locally transmitted cases of the virus-mediated infection. However, as of late, many Miami neighborhoods have been cleared of the virus. While progress has been made in Miami, other US cities are beginning to report their own cases of Zika virus. The first probable case of locally transmitted Zika virus has been reported in Texas. Texas was one of the first states to report cases of the Zika virus last winter, but those were cases of travelers coming to Texas from endemic regions. This more recent case is a result of local transmission.

Why is it a concern? It is well known that Zika virus can spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus and cause serious birth defects. Recently, teams from Brazil and the United States have linked the virus to glaucoma, a condition affected the eye. Glaucoma increases eye pressure, which can lead to blindness if the pressure is severe enough and not relieved.

Currently there is no specific medicine or vaccine for Zika and treatment involves managing the symptoms of the virus.

Although the World Health Organization announced that it no longer considers the Zika epidemic a public health emergency of international concern, Zika is not going away anytime soon and continues to pose a serious threat to pregnant women and babies.

What you can do? Take steps to prevent mosquito bites and plan for travel. Pregnant women should not travel to places where Zika is spreading including countries across Latin America, the Caribbean, parts of Southeast Asia, and neighborhoods in Miami.

Information in this article was referenced from cdc.gov, NBC News, and CIDRAP (Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy).


WORDS OF WISDOM
Finals Countdown!

As the semester drudges on, the distractions of life begin to mount – as do the piles around your desk. It can be easy to fall into the habit of grabbing books for class, running out the door, and then only returning to your desk to use it as a dump station for crumpled papers and textbooks. How can you sit down and study when there is no space, and Netflix just released that new show that everyone is watching? And with the holidays quickly approaching, it can be even harder to stay focused on schooling, when plans are being made with family and friends. Life gets crazy, but it is important that you don’t!

The following steps are on how to prepare for finals, all while keeping your cool:

1. Clean your desk or room

Researchers at the Princeton University Neuroscience Institute found that clutter causes distractions. Each item acts as a stimulus to your brain, which negatively impacts your ability to process information. By cleaning out your area, you will be able to feel some slight relief immediately in regards to your accumulating “to do” list.

2. Start early

The most stress-free way to approach finals is by starting early. Layout which dates you have exams on, or papers and projects due. Work backwards to plan in enough time for studying, reviewing, revising your work, and even time to visit your professor’s office hours. By getting a head start on the workload, you will be able to have plenty of time to deal with any unexpected hiccups along the way, and be able to decrease your amount of stress by not rushing. Then it is time to crack a book, and start reviewing your notes!

3. Get quality sleep

Everyone has heard that sleep is important, but many people underestimate the importance of getting quality sleep. Technology negatively impacts sleep in several ways. The light from a screen suppresses the body’s melatonin production, causes the brain to be alert for hours after viewing it, and causes other distractions once asleep. It is best to limit the amount of time viewing screens before bedtime, and to keep them silent during the night.

4. Healthy diet & exercise

This concept has been preached throughout your whole life too, but it’s true! By eating healthier foods that fuel your body for the day will save you from the crash that sugary foods and caffeine cause. Any type of exercise, even walking and stretching, will help promote blood flow to your brain, and has been shown to increase attention span, memory, and the ability to recall information.

PRE-MED PREP

When you’re not binge-watching the Gilmore Girls revival or
writing letters to Santa...

**Freshman/Sophomores** - Do well on finals and allow yourself some time to relax over the long holidays. You’ve hopefully found some organizations to get involved in and have scouted out some possible leadership roles in said organizations. Take some time for yourself - you’ve earned it! If you know of physicians back home who’d allow you to shadow, this is a great time to take them up on this. Send them an email and ask!

**Marquette Sophomores:** you may have had a guest lecturer this semester in Anatomy (a Dr. Steven Gerndt, MD). He is a cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon in Green Bay, WI. If he did lecture, he likely told all of you that you’re more than welcome to shadow him. Take him up on this! You get to scrub in on surgeries - something that some med students haven’t even done yet.

**Juniors** - To study for the MCAT over the holiday break or no? Totally up to you! Some people like to get a head start. This can be helpful for those of you who are worried you won’t be able to balance MCAT studying with your normal course load. For those of you who’d rather spend this quality time with your family and catching up on sleep, you do you! This is a totally doable option and will likely not put you at a disadvantage.

**Reminder:** you should be asking letter writers if they’d be willing to write letters of recommendations for you. Give yourself some time to find new writers if one of your "hopefuls" turns into a "hopeless."

**Seniors** - Interview season is mid-swing! Keep practicing those interview skills & be prepared to answer common interview questions like "why do you want to be a doctor?" as well as the random "personality" questions like "what do you like to do for fun?" (and please don’t say study). Think of unique answers that are still truthful. Interviewers hear a lot of "I like to run/exercise" or "I like to [insert something medically related here]." Do you like to do crossword puzzles? Say that! How about horse-back riding? What makes you unique is what makes you stand out!

You still have time to receive some interview invites, but now is a good time to start considering what you might want to do post-graduation in the event you don’t get an acceptance. Talk to your pre-health advisors for suggestions. Determine what aspects of your application could use some improvement and look into your options!