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The Current is the official student publication of Three Rivers Community College.

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Flu and RSV Cases are on the Rise

Comparing their symptoms, treatments, and prevention methods.

Story and graphic by Juliet Kimble

Cases of RSV and the flu have risen this fall. According to the New York Times article “‘This Is Our March 2020’: Children’s Hospitals Are Overwhelmed by R.S.V.” by Emily Baumgaertner, over 1,000 people tested positive for RSV at the Children’s National Hospital in Washington, D.C. between July and early October.

The flu is also prominent. “Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report (FluView)”, a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), estimated that, so far, at least 880,000 flu illnesses, 6,900 hospitalizations, and 360 deaths occurred as a result of the flu this season as of October 2022.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

The page “Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection (RSV)” on the CDC’s website (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) defines respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, as “a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms.”

The “Symptoms and Care” page on the CDC’s website lists various symptoms associated with RSV. These can include a runny nose, decreased

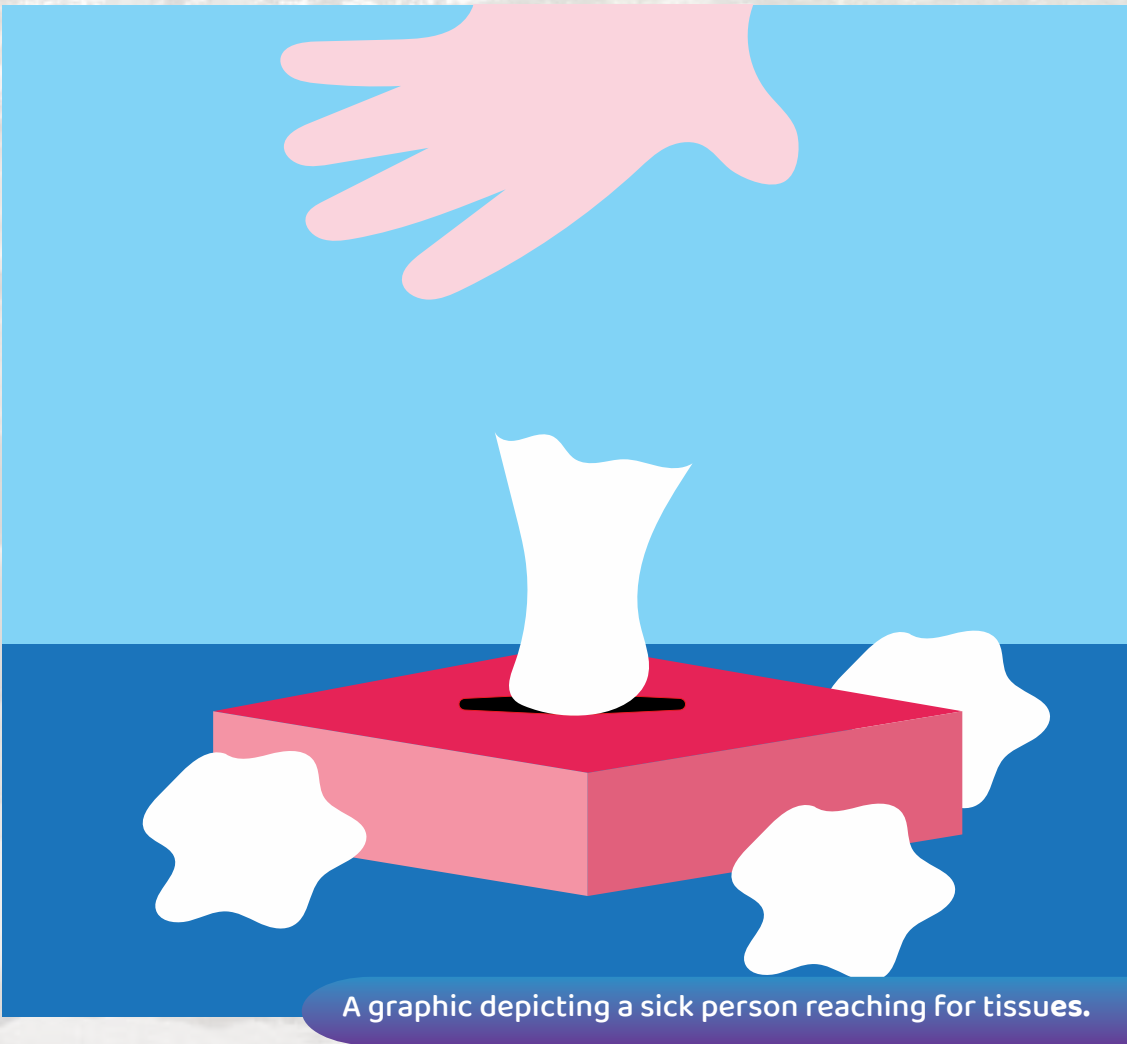
appetite, coughing, sneezing, fever, and wheezing. Symptoms usually show up between four and six days after a person is infected.

RSV tends to last one to two weeks, but groups most at risk include older adults, children under the age of one, young children and adults with weakened immune systems, and young children with heart or chronic lung disease (from birth), according to the page “People at High Risk for Severe RSV Infection” on the CDC’s website. Examples of conditions that can be caused by RSV include bronchiolitis and pneumonia, which both affect the lungs.

RSV is spread through contact with infected people and surfaces (according to the “Transmission of RSV” page on the CDC’s website), such as an infected person coughing or sneezing, direct contact and touching an infected surface before touching one’s face. RSV is contagious in people from three to eight days, while some infants and people with weaker immune systems can spread the virus for up to four weeks (even if their symptoms stop showing up).

The CDC recommends using over-the-counter fever reducers and pain relievers, drinking fluids to avoid dehydration, and talking with a healthcare provider before giving children nonprescription cold medicine (according to

the “Symptoms and Care” page on the CDC’s website). For more serious cases of RSV, people who have trouble breathing or are dehydrated may need to be hospitalized for a few days.



A graphic depicting a sick person reaching for tissues.

Influenza

According to the page “Key Facts About Influenza”, on the CDC’s website, influenza is defined as “a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs.”

Symptoms can include fever/feeling feverish, coughing, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children).



People with the flu are highly contagious three to four days after it begins, but the period can be longer for some people (such as young children and people with weakened immune systems) and start earlier for some healthy adults (such as one day before symptoms develop).

Groups most at risk include people aged 65 and older, people with certain chronic medical conditions, pregnant people, and children under five. According to the “Flu Symptoms & Complications” page on the CDC’s website, examples of conditions that can be caused by the flu include sinus and ear infections, pneumonia, myocarditis (heart inflammation), encephalitis (brain inflammation), myositis, rhabdomyolysis (both are muscle inflammation conditions), and multi-organ failure. Sepsis (the body’s response to an infection, which can be life-threatening) can also occur if there is an inflammatory response in the body, and people with existing conditions, such as asthma and chronic heart disease, can have worsened problems.

Transmission can occur when a person infected with the flu talks, sneezes, or coughs near another person, or (less often) a person touches a surface with the flu and touches their face (mouth, nose, eyes), according to the page “How Flu Spreads” on the CDC’s website.

People can treat the flu with flu antiviral drugs (prescription medicine) within two days of showing flu symptoms, increasing the chance of lessening the symptoms and shortening the time of illness by a day, according to the page “What are Flu Antiviral Drugs” on the CDC’s website. People must talk with their doctor in order to be prescribed this medicine, and those who are at higher risk of flu complications are encouraged to check with their doctor quickly.

Preventing RSV and the Flu

RSV does not have a vaccine, but steps can be taken to prevent its spread. According to the CDC page “Prevention”, people with cold-like symptoms should cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirt sleeve, wash their hands with soap and water often for 20 seconds, avoid close contact, and clean frequently touched surfaces (such as doorknobs and mobile devices).

They should also avoid interacting with children at risk (infants, children with chronic lung/heart conditions, weakened immune systems and/or neuromuscular disorders), or, if not possible, wash their hands and avoid kissing children.

Parents of children at risk should also avoid close contact with sick people, wash their hands often, avoid touching their faces with unwashed hands, and limit their time in childcare centers/contagious

settings (during high RSV activity). Parents can also talk to healthcare providers to see if palivizumab (a drug that could prevent severe RSV in certain infants/children at high risk for severe disease) could be used but it does not help treat severe cases of RSV that are already present.

The flu, on the other hand, does have a vaccine. People can take this vaccine yearly to reduce illness and complications. Groups of people who should not get a flu shot include children younger than 6 months, people with severe allergies to flu shot ingredients, and people who have had a severe allergic reaction to a flu shot in the past (according to the “Who Should and Who Should NOT Get a Flu Vaccine” page by the CDC) There are many different kinds of flu shots available. For more information on shot types and effectiveness, visit the CDC’s “Seasonal Flu Vaccines” page at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/flushot.htm>.

Overall, taking the correct measures will reduce your chances of getting sick.



Sepsis a Condition that Kills More Americans Than Stroke

Discussing sepsis, its symptoms, and its risks.

Story by Diana Rodriguez

The page “Sepsis” on Mayo Clinic’s website (<https://www.mayoclinic.org/>) defines sepsis as “a potentially life-threatening condition that occurs when the body’s response to an infection damages its own tissues. When the infection-fighting processes turn on in the body, they cause organs to function poorly and abnormally.”

Sepsis can lead to septic shock, which is a large drop in blood pressure that can lead to severe organ problems and death. In order to improve one’s chances of survival, they must seek treatment with antibiotics and intravenous fluids as early as possible.

As sepsis gets worse, blood flow to important organs (such as the brain, heart and kidneys) is damaged. Sepsis also has the potential to cause abnormal blood clotting that can lead to clots or burst blood vessels that can harm or destroy tissues.

While most people are capable of recovering from a mild case of sepsis, the mortality rate for septic shock

is around 40%, and severe sepsis can put people at higher risk of infections in the future.

Sepsis kills 270,000 people in the United States yearly (one every two minutes), is the third leading cause of death overall and is first leading cause of death in hospitals.

Who is at risk of sepsis?
According to the Cleveland Clinic, anyone can get sepsis, but those most at risk from the dangers of sepsis are:

- The elderly (over 65)
- Young children
- Pregnant women
- Those with pre-existing conditions (diabetes, kidney disease, lung conditions or cancer)
- Hospital patients
- People who have weak immune systems
- Patients using catheters or breathing tubes
- Patients with severe burns or large wounds

What are the symptoms of sepsis?

- Slurred speech
- Extreme muscle pain
- Passing no urine
- Severe breathlessness
- Feeling like you might die
- Skin mottled or discolored

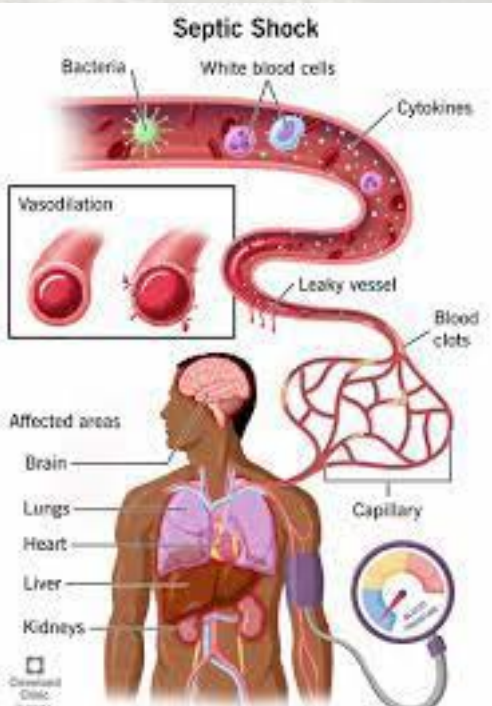
When it comes to sepsis, remember IT'S ABOUT TIME™. Watch for:

T	I	M	E
TEMPERATURE higher or lower than normal	INFECTION may have signs and symptoms of an infection	MENTAL DECLINE confused, sleepy, difficult to rouse	EXTREMELY ILL severe pain, discomfort, shortness of breath

If you experience a combination of these symptoms: seek urgent medical care, call 911, or go to the hospital with an advocate. Ask: "Could it be sepsis?"

©2020 Sepsis Alliance sepsis.org **SEPSIS ALLIANCE**

Image taken from the Sepsis Alliance explaining signs and symptoms of this disease. <https://www.sepsis.org/sepsis-basics/what-is-sepsis/>



What is septic shock? Image from <https://my.cleveland-clinic.org/health/diseases/23255-septic-shock>

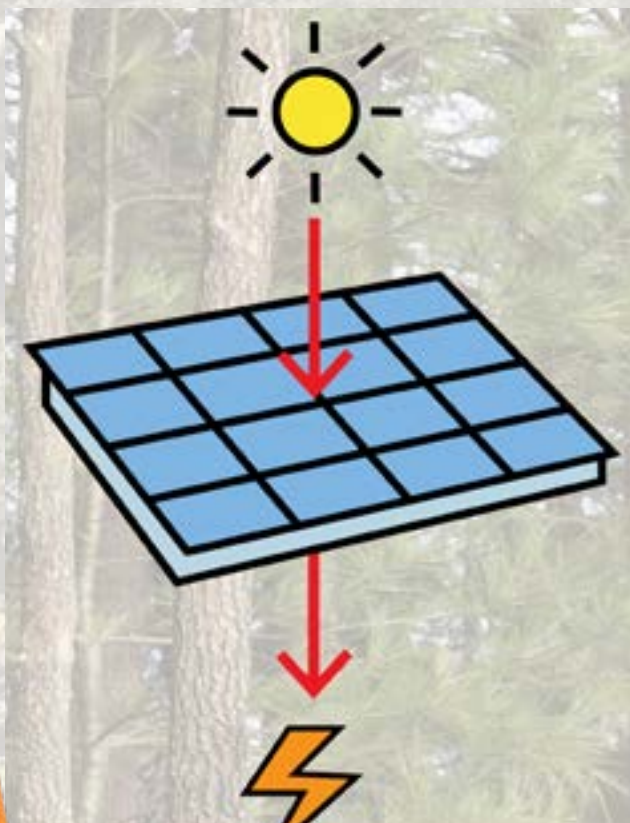


Are Solar Panels Effective?

Are solar panels really worth it?

Story and Photos by Axel Soto

Solar panels are becoming more popular as people try to figure out new ways to reduce high-priced bills in their homes. As the number of residents who decide to get solar panels installed in their homes increases, more questions begin to form about solar panels and whether they are as useful as others say they are.



Visual graph showing that solar panels transform sunlight into electricity that can power your home.

How do solar panels work?

Solar panels are made of PV cells that absorb light from the sun and convert it into electricity to be used in one's home. Some people decide to install solar panels in their homes because of the electricity used. The pros and cons of owning solar panels: There are some benefits in owning solar panels that may improve life qualities, but there are also some concerns that people should need to know before starting to invest in solar panels.

The page "Pros and cons of solar energy" by EnergySage (<https://news.energysage.com/>) lists various pros and cons. Here are the most common things you'll probably stumble across:

PROS:

- Reduces electric bill: Homes that have solar panels installed will use the power from them, reducing power given from companies.
- Solar Panels give your home more value: The biggest disadvantage of solar panels is how expensive they are, but if you plan on selling your home in the future, pre-installed solar panels can raise the house price in the market.
- Reduces carbon footprint: More environment friendly.
- Extra power gained from Solar Panels can be sold back to power companies: There will be times where solar panels get enough energy that it'll have spare electricity leftover. If you agree to a program called Net metering, all spare power gets sold back to the utility company which can reduce your power bill.



Solar panels are the most efficient in cities, but even in local towns you will find houses that have solar panels installed onto multiple roofs.

CONS:

- Solar panels require free space: Solar panels take up alot of space so having enough space is necessary.
- Solar panels only work during the daytime: They can only produce electricity from sunlight. If there is no sunlight, then there is no power. This also doesn't exclude cloudy days, solar panels will lose effectiveness.
- They are expensive: Solar panels are not cheap, and is generally the reason why a lot of people don't want them installed in their homes. Most solar panels will cost around \$10,000 or more.
- Energy conversion is not very high: Depending on how many solar panels are installed and how much sunlight they get, they sometimes cannot receive enough sunlight to convert to power. With that said, the average solar panel conversion rate is only about 15 - 22%.

So are solar panels worth it for everyone to own? Not necessarily. To get the most out of them, it depends on multiple criteria, such as what type of environment you live in and how much sunlight is being exposed on your home for solar panels to be as effective as possible. They are a big investment at the beginning, but under the right conditions, they can cut costs by a substantial amount.



Generation Z - Why Are They The Loneliest Generation?

How we can help build friendships.

Story and graphic by Samantha Rae

Loneliness and the Workplace”, a 2020 U.S. report by Cigna, surveyed 10,000 American adults in 2018 and found that nearly 79% of Generation Z reports feeling lonely in recent years. This is the highest percentage compared to millennials (71%), and boomers (50%). This makes Gen Z the loneliest generation. How has this become possible and what can we do to help?



Graphic depicting Generation Z and togetherness.

Ever since COVID-19 started to spread in late 2019, states were on lockdown and people had to stay home or quarantine. This affected Gen Z the most because of the shift from attending school in person to fully online remote classes. Many students stayed at home and used Zoom, Webex, or Blackboard to attend class meetings. Once the pandemic started to die down, students were able to go back to school in person, but things were not the same, since they have been stuck at home for a long time.

Now that almost everything is back to the way it used to be, how can we make sure that Gen Z can connect together again?

When it comes to school, we should encourage students to be their most authentic self (rather than follow certain crowds just to fit in) in order to foster strong, healthy friendships. We should also encourage students to participate in many after-school activities, such as sports and clubs. These activities introduce students to their fellow classmates and potential friends.



A Brief Overview of Black Friday

Discussing the origins of the event and how it is today.

Story by Juliet Kimble

Black Friday is an event that occurs on the Friday after Thanksgiving (November 25 this year). Stores throughout the United States cut prices on various items to encourage shoppers to buy them.

How did Black Friday start?

The origins surrounding the term “Black Friday” vary. According to the article “What’s the Real History of Black Friday?” by Sarah Pruitt on History’s website (<https://www.history.com/>), the term was first used to describe the U.S. gold market crashing on September 24, 1869. Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, Wall Street investors, bought up a large amount of U.S.’s gold in the hopes that they could lift the price and sell it for profit. That day, however, the stock market fell and affected people greatly.

It was again used in the 1950s by police officers in Philadelphia to describe situations where the city was flooded with people before the Army-Navy football game (held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving every year). Police officers would have to work on this day to deal with crowds (sometimes later than their shift), while some people would try to shoplift amidst the busyness.

“Sometime in the late 1980s, however, retailers found a way to reinvent Black Friday and turn it



A graphic depicting Black Friday.

into something that reflected positively, rather than negatively, on them and their customers,” the article said. Thus, products and discounts were eventually focused on.

How is Black Friday today?

Black Friday deals, days, and times vary by store. A number of stores hold their events before and/or after Black Friday (such as Cyber Monday, the Monday after Thanksgiving).

One example is Walmart. The Black Friday Deals for Days event began on November 7 online at 7pm (Eastern Standard time) and November 9 at 6am (locally), according to their website (<https://www.walmart.com/shop/deals/black-friday>).

Walmart+ members were able to buy the discounted products seven hours earlier than other shoppers.

Target has a similar event called Target Black Friday, where shoppers can find new deals on products every week throughout the month of November (<https://www.target.com/c/target-black-friday/-/N-5q0f2>).

What happened to the one-day event? There are many contributing factors, but a major one is the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary data from the company Sensormatic Solutions found that, in 2021, in-store shopping dropped by 28.3% (compared to 2019) according to the CNBC article “Black Friday shopping in stores drops 28% from pre-pandemic levels as shoppers spread spending throughout the season” by Lauren Thomas.

Customers choosing to stay home gives them the opportunity to purchase goods online, which means that stores have to accommodate for that.

Weighing the pros and cons

While Black Friday offers many deals and savings for shoppers, there are some problems.

Pros include:

- Goods are offered at a discount: Black Friday gives shoppers the chance to save money on goods that were initially out of their budget or not as desirable before the price cut.
- People can shop ahead of Christmas: Customers may be enticed to get a head start on their Christmas shopping by purchasing discounted goods.

Cons include:

- Items quickly sell out: Competition between shoppers means that items are more likely to sell out quickly, so being prepared for the event is key. In 2021, Adobe Analytics found that messages indicating products out of stock on store websites were up 124%, compared to pre-pandemic levels (from the “Black Friday shopping in stores drops 28% from pre-pandemic levels as shoppers spread spending throughout the season” article).
- Websites may crash: Online shoppers may find that a website won’t load due to a high amount of users on it at the same time.

Customers can take advantage of Black Friday deals by visiting each store’s website and making note of the dates, times, and items for sale.



A screenshot of Target's Black Friday ad.



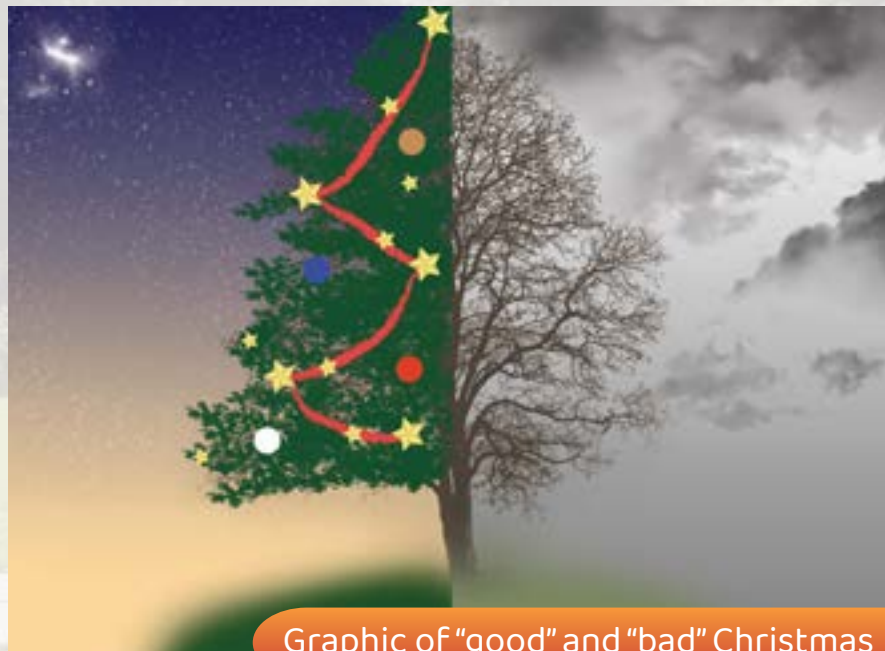
Christmas Gifts on a Budget

Tips to save money this holiday season.

Story and graphic by Bernard Moore

The holidays are upon us and so is the season of gift-giving. Christmas is just a month away! Some parents of children will rush to the store to grab some of the season's hottest toys.

Popular items like the PS5, Barbie Dream House, and latest technology will most likely fly off the shelves. For middle and lower-class households in America, Christmas can present a challenge, but what about students who split their time between taking classes and working part-time jobs to make ends meet?



Graphic of "good" and "bad" Christmas

Tackling this holiday can be difficult for students. Some struggle to attend classes and provide for their family at the same time. While it is nice to know that it is the thought and intention behind the gift that counts, it does not exclude us from the act of having to buy a physical gift.

It leaves some of us wishing we could get away with poorly-made cards and macaroni necklaces we used to spend hours crafting in kindergarten. So, here are some tips to keep in mind when shopping on a budget as a college student.

Tip number one

Do not wait until the last minute to go Christmas shopping for your parents, friends, or siblings. Last-minute shoppers may suffer from gift-buying remorse and try to make up for their guilt by buying more lavish gifts.

Tip number two

Be smart with your income before the holiday season starts. Buying gifts is no different from taking a test at the end of the semester.

You will want to make sure you pass your test so plan ahead. Take extra shifts at work if you are able to, have home-cooked meals instead of takeout or hang out with friends at home instead of going out on the town.

All of these changes will add to your success.

Tip number three

Keep an eye out for sales! Do your research ahead of time and know where to get the best deals. Some retail stores will increase many of their items' prices right before a sale, and then offer a discount to lure shoppers in. If you know the value of what you are going to buy beforehand at the regular off-season price, you will be able to spot a great deal when you see one in the store.

Tip number four

Be honest.

Do not max out your credit cards in order to pay for gifts! Be honest with your friends and let them know of your situation. You both could agree on a gift after the holiday season has ended.

You could also sit down with your parents or spend a few extra days at home with them to let them know how much you appreciate them.

Remember that it is not only about the gift but also about the intentions.



Working From Home: Job and School

Discussing remote work and school, side effects of sedentary behavior, and possible strategies to avoid health problems.

Story and photos by Juliet Kimble

The technologically-advanced 21st century is home to new opportunities to work and attend school in ways that were previously unavailable.

Students and employees have the option to work from home and/or take online classes. Remote work usually involves a laptop, computer, or mobile device. Meetings can be held through platforms like Zoom or WebEx and emails can be sent back and forth on websites like Gmail and Yahoo! Mail. For college students, assignments, messages and meetings are accessible through Blackboard (in the case of Three Rivers Community College), and students can send emails through Outlook.

Spending the majority of one's time at home staring at a screen, however, can cause problems.

One problem is computer vision syndrome, also known as digital eye strain. The page "Computer vision syndrome" by the American Optometric Association (AOA) on their website (<https://www.aoa.org>) defines computer vision syndrome as eye/vision problems that result from prolonged digital screen usage.

Symptoms can include eyestrain, headaches, blurry vision, dry eyes, neck pain and/or shoulder pain. The AOA lists possible causes

as poor lighting, digital screen glare, improper viewing distance (such as being too close), poor seating posture, uncorrected vision problems, or a combination of one or more factors.

An excessive amount of sedentary behavior should be avoided. The page "Physical Inactivity" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on their website (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) says that physical activity can help prevent and reduce certain problems, such as weight gain, chronic disease risk (heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes), anxiety, and dementia risks. It can improve a person's sleep quality, cognitive ability, and bone/musculoskeletal health.

Tips

Whether it be a planner, schedule, or app, keeping track of one's time throughout the day will help people stay focused on school and work.

One example is setting alarms. If a person has a Zoom meeting at 12pm, for example, they could consider setting an alarm that goes off 10-15 minutes before the actual meeting to avoid being late. They can also write down the days and times they work, attend online classes, or complete assignments.

Jaime Rix, a student at Three Rivers Community College, takes an online class. "I use an app called Notability and I write all the days in and then I write

the hours I'm at work, the hours the class are... Then I put how long I think it'll take to do an assignment," Rix said.

Notability is a note-taking app that offers many features, such as recording audio; marking up pdfs, slides, and forms; scanning documents and sketching. Taking advantage of an app or note-taking system will also help students and employees stay on track.

On the topic of avoiding health problems, people can take a break by looking away from the screen. The AOA recommends taking advantage of the 20-20-20 rule to relieve computer vision syndrome symptoms: Every 20 minutes, stare at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Movement is also recommended for people sitting down for long periods of time. You could exercise by walking, running, jogging, or biking. Physical activity is also possible through home chores such as cleaning or cooking.

"If you're fully at home I recommend taking breaks and not, like, straining yourself out, 'cause you'll get bored and you'll get distracted..." Rix said.

Using strategies to manage one's time and energy can help prevent health complications.



Graphic of a computer setup that remote workers and students may have.



Is College Becoming Less Popular?

Why some people are opting out of going to college.

Story and graphic by Bernard Moore

With the rise of social media, social influencers and overnight online fame, there has been a trend of high school kids rethinking their choice to enroll in a post-secondary institution. There is a 1.1% drop rate in enrollment across the US as of 2020, according to www.insidehighered.com.

The reality is that college has become an option instead of a necessity. Students realize the need for more people to enter the workforce. In the past, the military was a viable option if people did not want to attend college, but a number of jobs are willing to train newcomers.

Even for those who achieve the dream of internet fame and build a successful platform, school is not always a priority.

This could be also attributed to the changing times and advances in technology.

Students have become adept at the use of new skills in the workforce via Youtube videos and Google searches.

Students who, in the past, needed to learn skills (usually through college) in order to land jobs, no longer require a diploma to apply.

Job requirements have changed vastly in the U.S. from just being able to ring people up at a cash register and hand a customer a receipt.

Most jobs are being done by computers, and as long as someone has an understanding and is able to adapt to the new technology, a bachelor's degree is not a necessity.

Another major factor that contributes to the drop rate is colleges being unable to meet a student's needs. The reality is that a number of students work, and some students have families that they need to provide for, which makes it hard to enroll full-time.

Some students must choose between working for a living or going to school, and, depending on their financial situation, they may have to push college to the side.

On the other end of the spectrum, high-end jobs are highly sought after.

A person who distinguishes themselves from others and demonstrates a variety of skills may have an advantage when applying for a position.

College is one way to build skills, but students have to set time aside for classes and apply for financial aid or student loans (as well as out-of-pocket payments) to pay for tuition.

The result of taking out student loans will most likely leave a graduate with some form of debt and a better chance at obtaining their high-paying dream job, but is it truly worth it?



Graphic depicting the choice of college or factory work.



Do not Lose Track of Your College Responsibilities Over Thanksgiving Break

What you can do to avoid getting distracted.

Story and photos by Diana Rodriguez

Thanksgiving break may give students a chance to rest, but they can end up losing valuable time before finals if they do not work on college assignments. Use your break to complete assignments if you have some time between eating turkey and pumpkin pie.

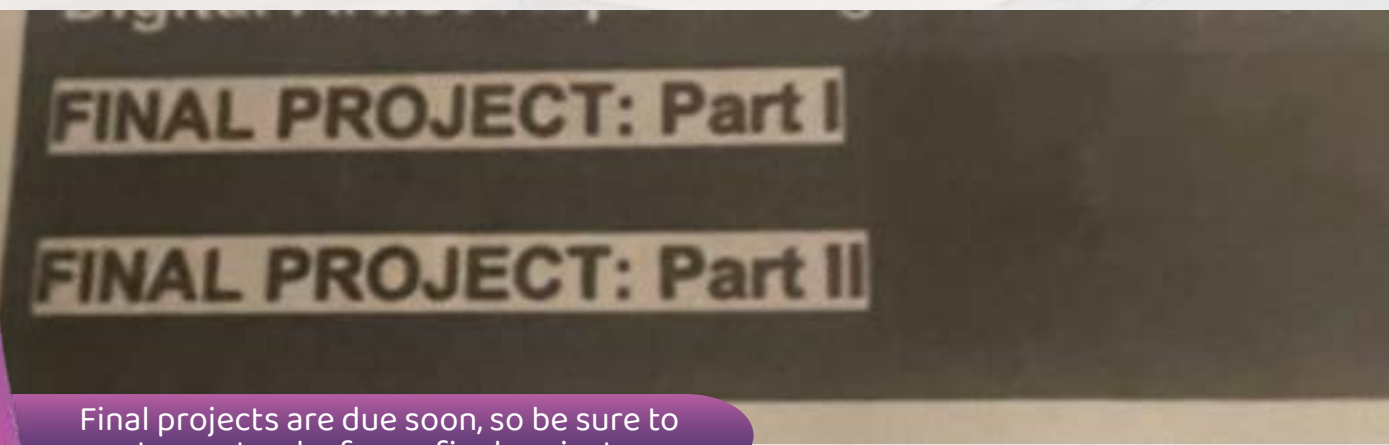
Setting goals and staying on top of your assignments while enjoying time with your family may seem difficult, but with the right mindset and support, it is possible.

1. Set realistic expectations

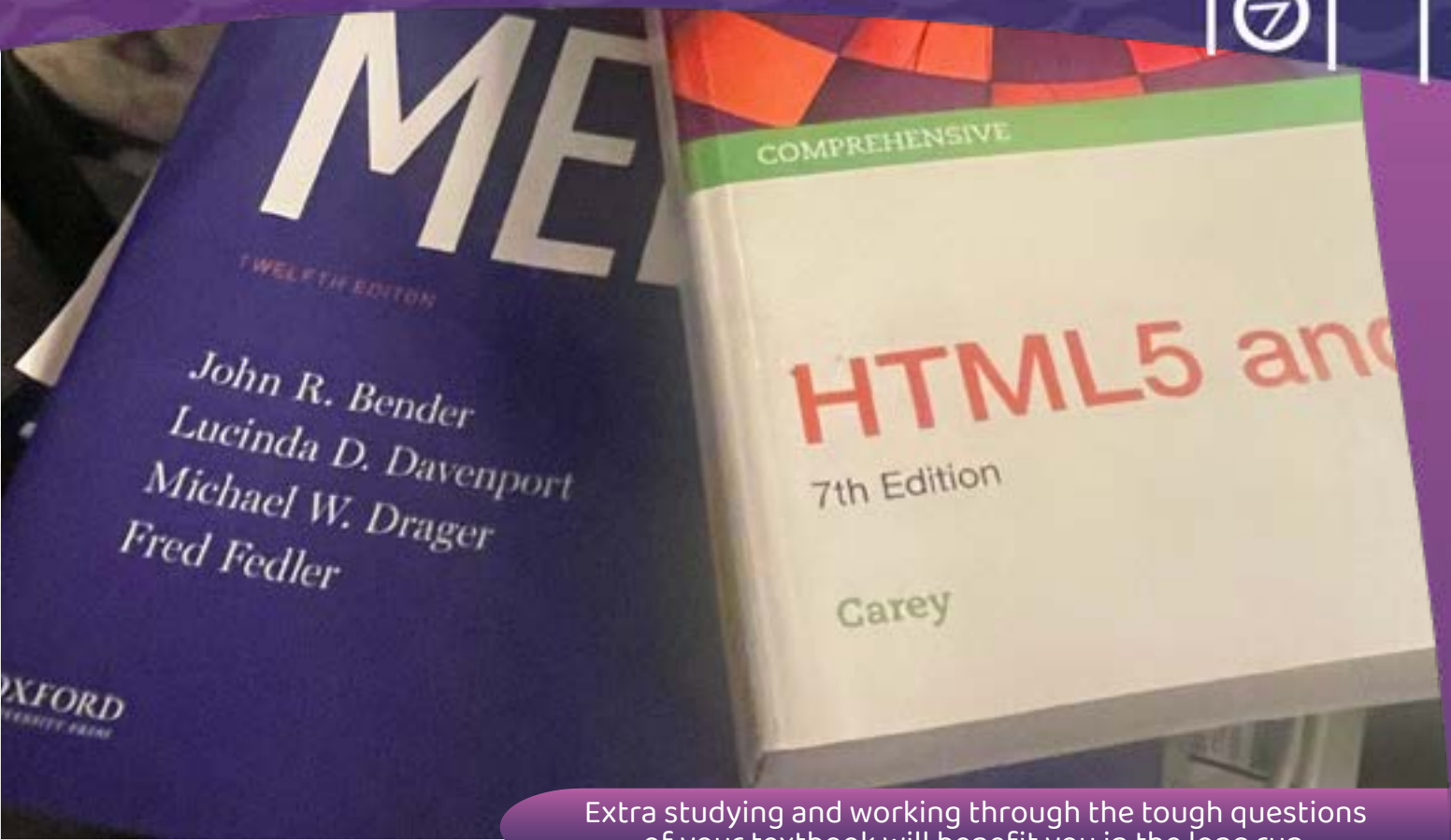
Set a reasonable amount of time to complete your assignments without ruining your break. This way you will not get overwhelmed and will be available to spend time with your loved ones.

2. Plan to study either early in the morning or late at night

If you are an early bird, get up early and study before your family wakes up. If you are a night-owl, try not to stay up studying too long because it will set you back the next day.



Final projects are due soon, so be sure to stay on track of your final projects.



Extra studying and working through the tough questions of your textbook will benefit you in the long run.

4. Talk to your family about your plan of study

Some people think that you do not have any obligations when you are on break. Be sure to let your family and friends know about your plans for keeping up with schoolwork so that they can support you and encourage you to keep going.

5. Be consistent

Even if you feel tired, try to push yourself to get things done and stay on track with your plan of study (but do not overdo it). It will help you to be more prepared for when you return to college after the break.

6. Do as much as you can so you can be ahead with your homework

During the semester you are given a certain amount of time to complete your assignments. Staying ahead means starting or completing an extra assignment, studying, and working your way through difficult questions in your textbook. Try to fit time for your assignments in between spending time with family and friends.

Following these tips will help you stay on track with school work during Thanksgiving and spend time with your loved ones.



Luckiest Girl Alive Review

A movie review (with mild spoilers).

Story by Bernard Moore

Luckiest Girl Alive is a 2022 film featuring Mila Kunis. It is based on Jessica Knoll's novel of the same name.

The film starts off by following the life of Ani, a woman living in New York who, on the surface, seems to have the perfect life.

She has her dream job, and a wealthy guy who gives her status in high society is helping her plan the perfect wedding.

Ani is soon approached by a film director that will inevitably be the person to open the door to her past. In a twist of events, viewers learn what changed Ani "Tiffani" into the person she is today.

In a series of flashbacks, Ani's dark past is revealed. The role of young Ani is portrayed by Chiara Aurelia (who played the character Addison Derringer in *Pretty Little Liars*), and viewers learn that Ani's life growing up was anything but perfect.

While adult Ani is thriving in New York, young Tiffani grew up struggling to attend a prestigious school on a writer's scholarship, something that most of her peers seem to point out in the film to remind her that she does not belong.

In the present, Ani is debating whether she wants to take part in a documentary.

She worries that her past will come back to haunt her. When she first told the truth about some of the victims before a school shooting, she was dismissed by the Dean and fellow students.

The series of events that sparked the downfall take place at the prestigious Brentley School.



"Luckiest Girl Alive" movie advertisement.

While the film switches back and forth between two time periods, it feels like each event is unfolding at the same time.

Both actresses for Ani are very distinct. Older Ani seems very solemn and grounded, outside of the few outbursts, which is a departure from her more typical roles like in *That 70's Show*. Young Ani, on the other hand, brings all the emotion and pain that her older self keeps in a box hidden away.

I recommend giving this movie a chance, although you should not be discouraged by the first ten minutes of the film.



Netflix poster of "Luckiest Girl Alive" movie.



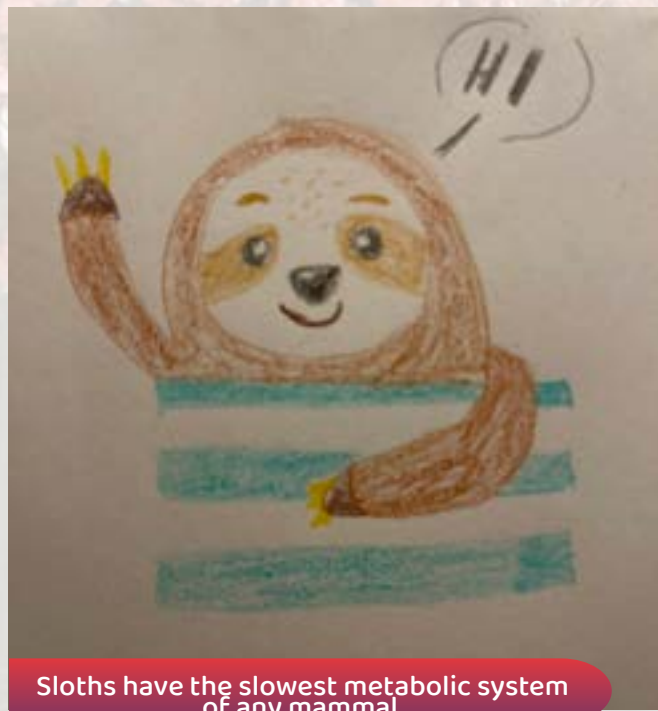
Did You Know? Random Facts That are Mind-Blowing

A list of interesting facts to impress your friends.

Story and photos by Diana Rodriguez

The best way to break the silence or to impress some friends is to mention an interesting fact you learn. Here are some interesting facts in case you need an icebreaker or just to say something interesting.

- You lose a large percentage of your taste buds while on an airplane. This will explain those not-stellar meals during a flight, and why you find yourself craving salty food while flying.
- Snails are slow creatures, but did you know that they can take the longest naps? One nap can last up to three years.
- In a group of 23 people, there is a 50% chance that two will share the same birthday.
- Russia has 11 time zones within the country, which gives you an idea of how large it is.
- The closest state in the United States to Africa is Maine.
- It takes a sloth two to four weeks to digest food. They have the slowest metabolic system of any mammal.



Sloths have the slowest metabolic system of any mammal.

- The world's largest concert lasted 453 hours (about 2 and a half weeks).
- Volleyball and basketball were both invented in Massachusetts.
- The British royal family is not allowed to play monopoly because it gets too competitive.
- More people are killed by vending machines than sharks, more than 90% of shark attacks are on males.
- You can eat the labels on fruits. Most of the time they are totally edible but may not taste good.
- It is illegal to feed pigeons on the sidewalk and streets in San Francisco.
- Einstein's brain was stolen when he died.
- Japan is suffering from a ninja shortage.
- Grapes light on fire in the microwave (Do not try this at home).

You can find these and more facts at: <https://parade.com/1199611/marynliles/did-you-know-facts/>



The British Royal Family is not allowed to play Monopoly.



Most labels of fruits are edible.

Cream Cheese Potato Casserole

A delicious mashed potato meal to make this Thanksgiving

Recipe and photos by Samantha Rae

This simple Cream Cheese Potato recipe has been included in our family Thanksgiving dinners for years! It's actually quite easy to prepare and is quite popular at large pot luck events as well. If you are looking for a relatively quick and easy side dish for the holidays, consider making this crowd pleasing casserole!



Cream cheese potato casserole is an easy side dish to prepare.

Ingredients:

Instant Potatoes 13.75 oz (any brand)
Salt
Butter
Milk
8 Ounces Cream Cheese (I actually use 12 ounces!)
¼ Cup Green Onions
Shredded Cheddar Cheese

Prepare instant potatoes according to directions for the largest serving. Finely chop one half cup green onions. Add softened cream cheese to potatoes, folding in thoroughly. Add green onions. Transfer to a glass casserole dish and sprinkle cheddar cheese on top. Bake at 325 degrees for 35 - 40 minutes or until slightly browned.

How to Make A Lip Scrub

Help cure dry and cracked lips this winter!

Recipe and photos by Samantha Rae

Struggling with dry and cracked lips during the cold months of the year? Something that can help make your lips smooth is a lip scrub, which is a sugar based lip treatment that you scrub on your lips to take away dead skin cells. This recipe will show you how to create your own lip scrub at home!

Ingredients:

- Cane sugar - 4 tablespoons
- Coconut oil - 2 tablespoons
- Shea butter - 1 tablespoon
- Flavoring oil - 6 drops (optional)

After you have all of your ingredients, mix them all together and place the mixture into a small cosmetic container.



An example of what your lip scrub could look like.



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