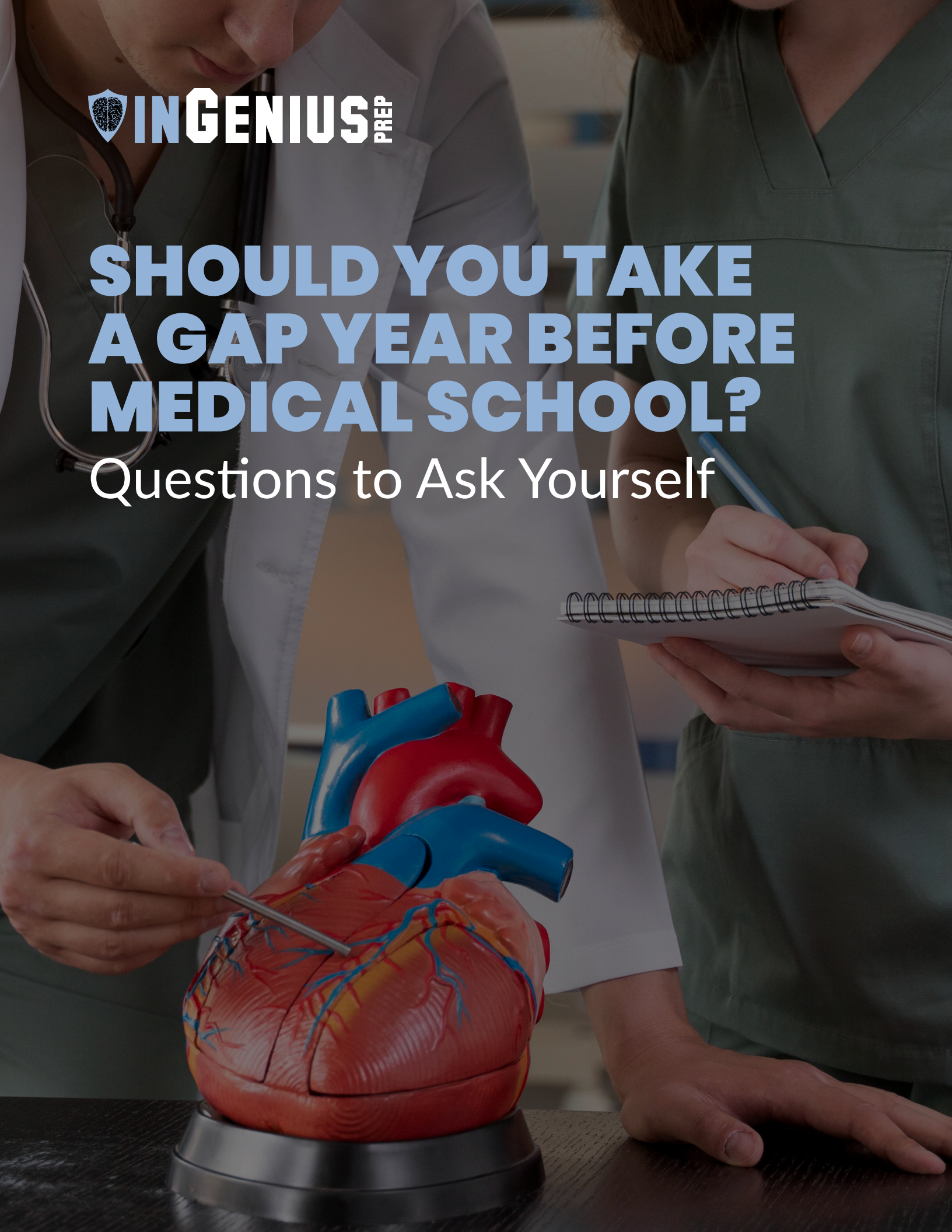




# SHOULD YOU TAKE A GAP YEAR BEFORE MEDICAL SCHOOL?

Questions to Ask Yourself





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Taking a gap year before medical school has become increasingly common, considering how cutthroat the medical school admissions process is. If you're a junior in college debating whether or not you should take the plunge right after senior year, chances are you might need one last push to make your decision. Use the questions below to help guide whether or not you should go ahead and start preparing your materials or opt for a year or two away from the admissions process to work hard and boost your chances.

1. Is your GPA strong and within the medians of the schools you might have your eyes on?
2. If not, would you require postbac classes once you've graduated to boost your GPA?
3. Have you met all of the prerequisite course requirements for medical school?
4. If not, do you have time to take them all before you graduate?
5. Have you already taken the MCAT?
6. If yes, does your MCAT score fall within the range of schools you're interested in?
7. If you're not happy with the score, do you have time to retake it?
8. If you haven't taken the MCAT yet, do you have enough time to study and take it?
9. Do you have impressive extracurriculars?
10. Have you covered all of the extracurricular bases—do you have shadowing, volunteering, patient interaction under your belt?
11. Are all your extracurriculars common? (Think: Pre-med club, medical scribe etc.)
12. Have you conducted research at a lab?
13. Would you need time off to get more work or clinical experience?

14. Medical school is expensive—do you have enough saved for tuition?
15. Are you burned out from school and college?
16. Would you like some time to experience the “real world” and spend time pursuing other interests or hobbies before dedicating yourself to the medical field?
17. Medical school is a big commitment—are you 100% sure medicine is what you want to do for the rest of your life or would you need some more time to reflect on your future plans?
18. Do you have an idea for a personal statement topic?
19. If so, does your reason behind pursuing medicine reflect uniquely in your personal statement?
20. Would you be able to juggle your senior year of college with all of the components of the medical school application?
21. Do you want to avoid losing precious time and immediately start medical school?
22. Do you have a plan about how you would strategically spend your gap year?
23. Would you get too used to the freedom and decide against medical school while in your gap year?
24. Do you think you would spend more than you would save?
25. Are you willing to risk being set back another year in case you aren't admitted to medical school the first time once you've taken a gap year?

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Ultimately, whether or not you should take a gap year before medical school depends entirely on your priorities. If you're happy with the quality of your numbers and extracurricular experiences and don't want to waste time, applying the summer after your junior year could definitely benefit you. But, if you're lacking in these departments and want to spend more time on your application components when you don't have to worry about midterms and finals, a gap year before medical school is a good idea. Carefully weigh your choices before making the call. Good luck!

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