

National Zoo closes panda habitat for possible pregnancy

June 25 2018



In this Aug. 20, 2016, file photo, Mei Xiang, mother of giant panda cub Bei Bei, eats Bei Bei's birthday cake at the National Zoo in Washington, during a celebration of Bei Bei's first birthday. Officials closed the David M. Rubenstein Family Giant Panda Habitat on Sunday, June 24, 2018, to give Mei Xiang some quiet time because she is exhibiting behaviors that are in line with both a pregnancy and false pregnancy. (AP Photo/Sait Serkan Gurbuz, File)

Paws are crossed at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington,

where a panda baby watch is underway.

Officials closed the David M. Rubenstein Family Giant Panda Habitat on Sunday to give Mei Xiang some quiet time because she's exhibiting behaviors that are in line with both a pregnancy and false [pregnancy](#).

Keepers can't confirm if she's pregnant. However, Mei Xiang is building a nest near her den, has decreased appetite, is sleeping more and is reacting to loud noises.

The zoo says pandas can have pseudo pregnancies in which they do everything they would if they were pregnant. However, hormone levels and their behavior eventually return to normal.

Outdoor habitats and viewing areas remain open for people to see the zoo's other pandas, Bei Bei and Tian Tian.

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