

A “Spring Forward” Could Be Just What the Doctor Ordered For Your Sleep Habits

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O’FALLON— On March 14 at 2 a.m. CST, people across the United States will reset their clocks and spring forward one hour into Daylight Saving Time. This change is often accompanied by complaints about losing that oh-so-important hour of sleep.

“Sleep is a restorative process,” said Dr. Ketan Shah, medical director of HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Southern Illinois Sleep Disorders Center. “All of the stress and difficulties we face daily are remedied as we sleep. That is why it is so important to practice good sleep techniques.”

Losing that hour of sleep is certainly frustrating, but HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital encourages people to use this time change to recognize how they feel when they wake up and adjust their sleep schedule or techniques.

“Sleep comprises about one-third of your life,” Dr. Shah said. “It is really important to get that third correct.”

According to the [American Academy of Sleep Medicine](#), sleep is one of the three pillars of a healthy lifestyle along with nutrition and exercise. Healthy sleep is essential to your physical health and mental health; improves your memory and focus; and promotes personal and public safety.

Here are some recommended sleep tips to get a good night’s sleep:

- Be consistent. Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, even on the weekends.
- Limit the use of electronics one hour before bed to prepare bodies and brains for sleep.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, relaxing and at a comfortable temperature.
- Avoid watching TV in the bedroom before sleep.
- Avoid using devices that emit light – smartphones, tablets and computers, etc. Blue light emitted by these devices resets the clock in the brain which can delay sleep.
- Get some exercise. Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep more easily at night.

If you have concerns about sleep patterns, or difficulties falling or staying asleep, talk to your primary care physician to request a referral to HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Southern Illinois Sleep Disorders Center.

Learn more about St. Elizabeth’s Southern Illinois Sleep Disorders Center’s services by visiting steliz.org or calling 618-234-2120, Ext. 11534 or 1-888-650-7474.

For more information about healthy sleep habits or sleep disorders, visit cdc.gov/sleep.