

Sleep experts call for end to twice-a-year time changes

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Spring and fall time changes for daylight saving time should be scrapped

because they pose health and safety risks, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) says.

Moving clocks ahead and losing an hour of sleep presents [hazards](#) that include: an increase in [car crashes](#) and [fatal crashes](#); a rise in missed medical appointments; a higher risk of stroke and hospital admissions; greater chance of mood disturbances, and a disruption of the body's [internal clock](#) that harms sleep quality and leads to sleep loss, according to the academy.

"Physicians, legislators and the [general public](#) have been talking about the health and safety benefits of eliminating seasonal time changes for years," said Erin Flynn-Evans, a sleep and circadian researcher who is a consultant to the AASM's Public Safety Committee.

"Research shows that time changes affect the body's circadian rhythm, or body clock, which makes it more difficult to achieve quality sleep and also negatively impacts health and safety," Flynn-Evans said in an academy news release.

Americans will move clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 13.

A U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee held a hearing this week on impacts of the seasonal time change, and a bill introduced in the U.S. Senate last year would make daylight saving time permanent nationwide. More than 40 states are considering changes to end the shifting.

A pair of experts who testified at the subcommittee hearing said the seasonal disruption is damaging to sleep and linked to significant health issues, according to the [Washington Post](#).

But AASM says evidence supports the adoption of year-round standard time, rather than daylight saving time.

"There is no question that putting an end to seasonal time change is best for Americans' well-being," Flynn-Evans said. "However, a shift to permanent daylight time—which would result in more morning darkness in the winter—would result in most people experiencing a misalignment between the body's daily rhythm and the timing of routine social obligations like work and school. Therefore, permanent year-round standard time is the best choice to most closely match the circadian sleep-wake cycle."

To help you make the adjustment when clocks move ahead an hour this weekend, AASM offers some tips:

- Adults should get at least seven hours of sleep and teens should strive for eight hours each night before and after the time change.
- Go to bed 15 or 20 minutes earlier each night.
- In the hour before bedtime, dim your lights and minimize screen use.
- Adjust scheduling of other daily routines that are "time cues" for your body. For example, start eating dinner a little earlier each night.
- On Saturday night, set your clocks ahead one hour in the early evening. Then go to sleep at your normal bedtime.
- Go outside for some early morning sunlight on Sunday. That will help set your internal clock.
- Then, go to bed early enough on Sunday to get plenty of sleep before the work week begins Monday.

"We are hopeful that seasonal time changes will be eliminated in the near future," Flynn-Evans said. "Until then, it's important to be mindful of the health and safety consequences this time change can have and to prepare for it as best as possible."

More information: There's more on daylight saving time at the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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