

Prevent sleep deprivation this daylight saving time (w/ Video)

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Whether you work an eight-hour shift or around the clock, chances are you are not getting the sleep you need. Dr. Aparajitha Verma, medical director of the Sleep Disorders Center at the Methodist Neurological Institute, says the return of daylight saving time is a reminder of the consequences of sleep deprivation. She offers some tips to help the more than 70 million Americans cope with sleep issues.

Prevent sleep deprivation this daylight saving time

Dr. Aparajitha Verma, medical director, [Sleep Disorders Center](#), Methodist Neurological Institute, Houston, Texas:

I tell all my patients that the best way to combat [sleep problems](#) is to practice good "sleep hygiene." This is especially true when schedules can be easily thrown off by the time change we're about to experience on March 14.

To better prepare yourself for losing that hour of sleep, you need to make sure you're well-rested before the time change. One way to do that is to start changing your sleep habits days before the time change. You can get up an hour earlier and go to sleep an hour earlier. You can also take a nap in the afternoon on your day off. Just make sure the nap isn't within a few hours of your regular bedtime. Napping too close to bedtime can disrupt nighttime sleep.

Disrupted sleep patterns can lead to more serious health and lifestyle issues. As you're trying to get used to the time change, keep in mind that if you can't fall asleep within 30 minutes of lying down, if you have excessive daytime sleepiness, or if you're still sleeping for seven or more hours and waking up tired, you may have a more serious sleeping disorder. I recommend that people with these symptoms consider an overnight sleep study at a center that is accredited by the American

Academy of Sleep Medicine, such as the center here at the Methodist Neurological Institute.

Circadian rhythms, or our internal body clocks, are the patterns of repeated activity associated with the environmental cycles of day and night. If you have trouble sleeping, then your internal clock is likely out of sync with the day-night cycle. So it stands to reason that if you're well rested and your circadian rhythm is working with your schedule, some people don't even need an alarm clock to get up in the morning.

As for the good "[sleep hygiene](#)" that I mentioned, here are some tips to practice year round -

- Sleep in a quiet and dark environment and set the thermostat at a slightly cooler temperature;
- Don't allow pets in the bed;
- No reading, eating or watching TV in bed;
- Don't watch the clock;
- Set a "wind down" time prior to going to bed;
- Don't take over the counter sleep aids and avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol close to bedtime, as these can disrupt sleep.? Instead, try drinking warm teas or milk to increase your body temperature, which helps induce and sustain sleep;
- Exercise is good for sleep, but not within two hours of going to sleep

Provided by Methodist Hospital System

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