



# Toolbox Talk: Daylight Saving Time “Unintentional Consequences”

## **Introduction/Overview:**

George Hudson proposed the idea of Daylight-Saving Time (DST) in 1895. Since that time, many states and localities have had some variation of DST.

The United States started DST in 1918. In 2005 the Energy Policy Act extended Daylight Saving Time in the U.S., and these changes were set to begin in 2007.

In 2020, DST began on March 8, 2020, at 2:00 am. At that time, we moved our clocks ahead one hour (Spring forward). On November 1, 2020, at 1:00 am, DST ends, and we will move our clocks back one hour (Fall back).

The primary reason [DST was developed](#) was to increase the use of daylight hours. The reasons varied over the years. Typical reasons included increased planting time, more time to enjoy the outdoors, and help lower the crime rate. Back in the 1970s when the energy crisis was occurring, DST helped to reduce energy use.

However, over the years, unintended consequences began to emerge. These consequences included significant health concerns.

## **Statistics:**

According to an article published in [BMJ Journals](#), following DST changes in the spring, a 24% increase in heart attacks occurred. After a couple of days, rates returned to the average percentages. The increase in heart attacks was not observed in the Fall when DST ended. It is believed that the loss of one hour of sleep increases the chances of a heart attack.

Other sources, such as [OSG](#), report a temporary drop in productivity, an increase in car and pedestrian incidents, and the occurrence of medical issues such as heart attack and stroke.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) state it is believed that the reason for these problems is the disruption to our circadian rhythms. Circadian rhythms are daily cycles of hormones and body functions that prepare us for the expected times for sleeping, eating, and activity. Circadian rhythms have difficulty adjusting to even a one-hour time change. This difficulty in adjusting is experienced in both DST changes in the Spring and Fall.

Developed by:

## Talking Points:

So how do we combat these issues? According to the [American Academy of Sleep Medicine](#), we can do the following:

- Ensure you get a minimum of seven hours of sleep every night.
- If you do not regularly get a minimum of seven hours of sleep a night, then the DST change may increase your body's negative effect.
- A couple of weeks before DST changes, notify your employees that they may experience a higher incidence of health issues (especially those with pre-existing conditions) and potential accidents for a short period of time after the DST changes.
- Slowly adjust sleep time, eating, exercise, and exposure to light for about 15 – 20 minutes a day starting a few days before the Spring DST change. By allowing your body to slowly adjust instead of “all of a sudden shock” to your body, your body will better adjust to your circadian rhythms.
- Dim the lights about one hour before bedtime and avoid backlit computer screens and other electronic devices.
- Set your clock an hour ahead early in the evening on the Saturday before the DST change and go to bed around your usual bedtime.
- A few days before the Fall DST change, do the reversal of the above.

## Additional Discussion Notes:

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## Final Thoughts:

Keep in mind that DST changes can negatively affect your health and safety. By following the above guidelines, you will be prepared to navigate the dangers of DST changes.

For more information and a way to get involved with sleep disorders and helping others, refer to the below URL.

<http://worldsleepday.org/Get-Involved>

**NOTE:** Always promote discussion with the attendees. If a question comes up that no one in attendance can answer, please contact DHRM/OWC/Loss Control Consultants for assistance.

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