**Daylight Savings Time (DST) and Falls**

**Daylight saving time changes impact people differently, according to new research**

July 26, 2021

A man squints in the morning as he reaches to turn off his alarm.

Twice a year, many Americans prepare for daylight saving time – a period when time springs forward by an hour in March and falls back in November – by adjusting their clocks. A study in Scientific Reports external link found this change impacts people differently – based on their tendency to be an early riser or to go to bed later.

As part of the Intern Health Study, 831 medical residents shared their genetic information and wore a fitness tracker to track their sleep patterns. Researchers assessed changes in their sleep schedules the week before, during, and after daylight saving time in March 2019. They found early risers, based on genetic associations, took a few days to adjust to losing an hour of sleep and gaining daylight. But those wired to stay up later were affected by the time change a week later. They showed signs of jet lag, the feeling of being misaligned when traveling across time zones.

The authors note sleep deprivation has been associated with an increased number of car accidents and heart attacks. For medical residents, this extra sleep loss could also translate to an increased number of medical errors and exaggerate depressive symptoms – especially for those most impacted by the time difference. The study was supported by the NHLBI and the National Institute of Mental Health.

**SOURCE:**

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/news/2021/daylight-saving-time-changes-impact-people-differently-according-new-research>

**NBC4: Daylight Saving time can mean increase in emergency room visits**

If you feel a little drowsy Monday morning, it's probably due in part to Daylight Saving time happening on Sunday, where we'll all "spring forward" an hour. Sure, the extra daylight in the evening is nice, but it can make for some groggy mornings as we adjust to the lost hour.

But it’s more than just being a little extra tired those first few days. Michelle Kincaid, MD, a trauma surgeon at OhioHealth Grant Medical Center, said it’s also a time when emergency departments start to see more patients who have suffered accidents.

“Whether it’s car accidents, motorcycle, ATV, (it’s) related to Daylight Saving, but also, it’s usually the time of year when the weather gets nicer and people are doing more risky behaviors,” Dr. Kincaid told NBC4 reporter Olivia Fecteau recently.

And this isn’t just the day after springing forward. Dr. Kincaid said told Fecteau that the effects of the time change can last for several more days. *– Changes to our Circadian rhythm and sleep patterns*

Falling back an hour in the autumn months can also have an effect, too.

“There are some people that looked at the fall Daylight Saving, and maybe an increase in pedestrians being hit by cars. It’s a little bit darker sooner and people aren’t paying as close attention when they’re driving,” Kincaid told NBC4.

So, what can people do to avoid needing to visit an emergency room following Daylight Saving time and beyond?

“Certainly, being cognizant of maybe a lack of sleep the night before, always avoiding drugs and alcohol when driving, and certainly distracted driving is a big problem that we’re seeing,” Dr. Kincaid said.

**SOURCE:** <https://newsroom.ohiohealth.com/nbc4-daylight-saving-time-can-mean-increase-in-emergency-room-visits/>

**Accident rates and the impact of daylight saving time transitions**

David Robb 1, Thomas Barnes 2

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***Abstract***

One-third of nations have adopted some form of Daylight Saving Time (DST). Associated costs and benefits include impacts on accident rates. Using data from 12.6 million accident claims in New Zealand during 2005-2016, we model accident rates as a function of various date-based predictors including days before/after the start and end of DST, holidays, day of week, and month of year. This is the first study to consider multiple accident categories (Road, Work, Falls and Home & Community), and the first in the southern hemisphere. The start of DST is associated with significantly higher rates of road accidents (first day +16% and second day +12%). Evidence that accident rates for Falls and Home & Community decline (increase) prior to the start (end) of DST suggest potential behavioral adaption from anticipating the change. While Work accidents show limited impact from DST changes, they exhibit a significant decline over the course of the week (Friday 13% lower than Monday), whereas Road accidents exhibit a significant increase (Friday 19% higher than Monday).

**SOURCE:** <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29223028/>

**6 Simple Tips for Seniors to Deal with Daylight Savings**

March 16, 2022 by Ritesh

Changes in the clock during DST can adversely affect the mental health of many older adults. Let us look at some simple tips for seniors to deal with Daylight savings every year.

**Contents**

Daylight plays a significant role in our lives related to our sleep cycles and appetite. Setting the clock ahead one hour every year during DST confuses the body, which may be unable at times to adjust to the new (albeit temporary) reality.

*– We talked about the Circadian Rhythm and its importance to our sleep.*

**Simple Tips for Seniors to Deal with Daylight Savings**

There are some ways to overcome the impact and reduce the effect of the symptoms. In this article, you will come across different ways to help seniors deal with daylight savings and sundowners syndrome.

**How Does Daylight Savings Time Impact Seniors?**

DST can impact the mental health of seniors in a couple of ways:

It can cause sleep-related problems because of the sudden change in the sleep cycle. Lack of sleep can be particularly dangerous because it increases the risk of injuries and falls in seniors.

Studies have shown that heart attack instances go up at the beginning of DST in November every year and at the end in March.

Instances of depression and anxiety, which are very common in older adults, also spike during the beginning and end of the DST cycle.

Nearly 20% of Alzheimer’s patients are known to be impacted by “sundowners syndrome.” DST tends to enhance the effects of sundowners syndrome.

The best and most important tip to dealing with DST is to ensure that you get enough sleep. Most of the tips in our article are intended to make sure that you get the right amount of sleep by cutting down distractions.

**What Are the Ways for Seniors to Deal with Daylight Savings?**

*#1 Use the bedroom only for sleeping:*

Many people use the bedroom for performing various activities like eating food, watching TV in bed, reading, and other activities. These activities are known to be distractive. These distractions become a barrier to your sleep time.

Due to this, you are unable to sleep. You should allocate your bedroom only for sleeping. Make sure that it is cool and dark to sleep comfortably. A quiet ambiance can lead to sound sleep for elders.

*#2 Try to sleep consistently*

Maintaining a sleeping pattern is essential. Having a good eating pattern is vital for health and wellness. Maintaining a sleeping and waking up routine is necessary. Try to wake up and sleep at the same time every day.

Simple Tips for Seniors to Deal with Daylight Savings

*#3 Try to exercise and spend time outside*

Exercise is vital for the overall well-being of a particular person. It not only prevents osteoporosis in older adults but also reduces the symptoms of depression and anxiety. Similarly, going outside in the presence of natural sunlight is essential.

* *Remember we talked about the impacts of exercise being as powerful as Zoloft when it comes to treating anxiety and depression.*

Performing cardiovascular exercises like swimming, gardening, and jogging can help seniors fall asleep faster and earlier. It helps to regulate the natural rhythm of the body. Going out in the sunlight will help you promote balance in your mind and body.

*#4 Avoid alcohol and caffeine*

Older adults should avoid alcohol and caffeine before sleeping. Both of these are known to disrupt sleep. If they consume alcohol, they will suffer from dizziness and won’t be able to sleep properly. Consuming caffeine is known to affect melatonin levels.

Melatonin is a hormone produced in the body to regulate a person’s sleep cycle. Due to the consumption of caffeine, melatonin levels go down. Thus, you are not able to sleep properly.

*#5 Don’t take naps in between:*

Older adults tend to take small naps during the day. This causes them to sleep during the day but lose sleep during the night. To prevent these small naps, it is essential to keep yourself busy during the daytime.

You can get involved in outdoor activities like gardening, walking, or even sitting on the patio. If you think you must take a nap, make sure that it lasts for not more than 15 minutes.

Simple Tips for Seniors to Deal with Daylight Savings

*#6 Set the environment and try to eliminate disturbance:*

Older adults wake up quickly if there are disturbances. You can set the mood at least an hour before sleeping. By doing this, you can eliminate all the disturbances and noise. This may help you sleep properly.

Try to consume your dinner at least two hours before sleeping. Eating dinner as early as possible is good for your body and leads to good sleep.

* *Let’s talk really quickly about Sundowners Syndrome…*

**Sundowners Syndrome**

People who suffer from Sundowners Syndrome tend to show changes in their behavior as the sun begins to set. Patients with ***Alzheimer’s disease*** often suffer from this problem because it is related to confusion and memory loss.

Sundowners syndrome is also called late-day confusion or sundowning. It starts during the late afternoon and is known to continue till night. It can cause a whole range of symptoms, including agitation, pacing, wandering, confusion, disorientation, and anxiety.

People who live with dementia go through behavioral symptoms. People who go from the moderate stage of Alzheimer’s disease also suffer from behavioral changes.

There is no proper reason why these factors cause changes in sleep patterns, behavior; they also go through arthritis, restlessness like thirst and hunger, behavioral changes like fatigue.

Simple Tips for Seniors to Deal with Daylight Savings

What are the symptoms of sundowners syndrome?

Sundowning is known to occur between 4:30 pm to 11 pm. It can worsen the condition during the winter months as the daylight hours decrease. The signs and symptoms which a person suffers from are-

Pacing

Wandering

Hallucination

Confusion

Delusion

Excessive anxiety

Discomfort and pain

Fatigue

The symptoms can worsen in the late day period. It can become difficult for you to manage.

**What are the causes of Sundowners syndrome?**

Researchers and doctors are not sure about what leads to sundowners syndrome. Some scientists believe that various changes occur in the brain that affects the body clock of the person.

There is a region in the brain that is known to break the signals of the circadian rhythm in people who go through Alzheimer’s. This may lead to sundown syndrome.

They may feel:

Bored

Suffering from sleep problems

Hunger

Thirst

Depression

Being tired

Suffering from pain.

The older adults who go through the sundowners syndrome suffer from being tired or excessive frustration by the end of the day. If you see any person going through this syndrome, then you can help them in their life by managing their emotions by keeping them preoccupied.

**The triggers of sundowning syndrome are:**

Not being able to identify between dreams and reality.

The presence of less light in the house and more shadow. It can lead to confusion and fear.

***What (are) things can you do to stay calm while going through sundowners syndrome?***

Add more comfort to your sleeping area

Try to listen to relaxing music or go for a walk, play cards, read.

Try to eliminate the distractions in the house such as TVs, down or off, loud noises, phones.

Ask your family members to make less noise.

Make sure your room temperature is fixed.

Try to close the curtains and blinds. Try to light up your room as it is known to make you more upset.

**Daylight Affects Sundowners:**

Light plays an integral role in setting up one’s internal clock or circadian rhythm. So yes, there is no doubt that daylight affects sundowners. The symptoms may worsen during the late day and lead to frustration and anxiety.

When the clock is set an hour back, the day begins early and therefore ends earlier as well. This increases the confusion that is caused due to loss of light and therefore impacts people who are affected by Sundowner syndrome quite significantly.

To overcome this, you can work on being out in the daylight. Try to eliminate darkness as much as you can. It will help you to set your internal clock again. These factors can reduce the symptoms of sundowning syndrome.

**Wrap Up**

The world can be a confusing place for seniors as it is, without the added confusion of moving the clock around by one hour during daylight savings time. When DST comes into place, you might spend a few days adjusting to the change in timings with your internal body clock.

Simple Tips for Seniors to Deal with Daylight Savings

Many people who have dementia and Alzheimer’s disease suffer from sundowners syndrome. When DST comes in, the day starts earlier and ends earlier as well, which may cause the sufferer to become confused easily and start feeling the symptoms of low light more often.

It is essential to set your environment appropriately for being healthy. You can set a daily routine that will help you overcome sundowners syndrome. Make sure you go through some of these tips in these articles so that you can avoid becoming agitated due to DST.

If you have any further questions or queries, we will be happy to assist you. Simply drop us a message in the comments section. We hope you liked the content, and if so, request you to please share it on your social media handles so that it can reach out to the maximum number of people who need this information.

**SOUCE:** <https://respectcaregivers.org/tips-for-seniors-to-deal-with-daylight-savings/>

**5 Tips for Coping with the Effects of Daylight Saving Time**

Anne-Marie Botek

Updated March 10, 2022

As we prepare to “spring forward” an hour and begin daylight saving time (DST) this Sunday, it’s important to keep in mind how even a tiny time change can affect your health—particularly if you’re older or suffering from a chronic illness.

**Negative Health Effects of Daylight Saving Time**

Studies have shown that the spring daylight saving time shift can impact a person’s well-being in several ways, including the following:

Sleep Struggles

Interruption of regular sleep patterns is by far the biggest problem with daylight saving time. Even a small change in your sleep schedule can knock your natural circadian rhythm out of whack. One study found that the average person loses about 40 minutes of sleep on the Monday following the switch to daylight saving time. This may not seem significant, but sleep deprivation and circadian misalignment in the days following the change can lead to grogginess, forgetfulness and poor concentration.

Cardiovascular Risks

A meta-analysis of seven studies on the effects of DST on cardiovascular health confirmed that there is a significantly higher risk of heart attack during the two-week period following the spring transition.

The “DST Effect”

Daylight saving time also appears to impact automobile accident rates. A 2020 study found that “spring DST significantly increased fatal motor vehicle accident risk by 6%” for Americans in the week following the time change. Researchers observed that this increase is more pronounced in the morning and in locations further west within a time zone, but motor vehicle accident risk is also increased in the afternoons during this week as well. Experts aren’t in agreement as to exactly why this occurs, though many speculate that the phenomenon stems from an increase in sleepy drivers, and those running late for work.

“Springing Forward” Is Harder on Seniors

An extra cup of coffee and a few days to adjust is enough to get most people back on their feet after a time change. However, the same may not apply for older adults or those in poor health.

The biggest problem that older individuals have with daylight saving time is loss of sleep.

“Sleep fragmentation is already typical among older adults—particularly those who have chronic health conditions,” explains Sharon Roth Maguire, M.S., RN, GNP-BC, vice president and director of health services for LCS. “Even small changes in sleep patterns can have significant consequences for senior health.”

**A sleep-deprived senior is more likely to make mistakes with their medications and may have an increased risk of falling, says Roth Maguire, who has decades of experience working with the elderly as a geriatric nurse practitioner.**

Matthew Mingrone, M.D., lead physician at Bay Area Sleep and Breathing Solutions in California, adds that disrupting a senior’s natural biological rhythms may also cause an increase in disorientation and erratic behavior. This combination can be very dangerous for older adults who are still driving.

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Keep in mind that those living with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia may be extra disoriented by the time change. Unfortunately, sleep deprivation and circadian disturbances can exacerbate troublesome dementia behaviors, including wandering, shadowing and sundowning. Try your best to adhere to their daily routine, but be flexible and understanding if your loved one is more agitated, anxious or drowsy than usual.

5 Tips for Adjusting to Daylight Saving Time

Seniors and their family caregivers will probably experience at least mild effects of turning the clocks forward this weekend. Following the tips below should help you both cope in the days and weeks after DST begins.

Stick to a routine.

Adhering to a regular sleep pattern (varying the time you go to bed and the time you wake up by no more than 20 minutes) helps keep your internal cycle on track, despite a slight time change, says Mingrone.

Stay away from sleep disrupters.

Caffeine, alcohol, over-the-counter sleep medications and additional naps are all no-no’s, especially during the days surrounding daylight saving time, according to Roth Maguire.

Get some sun.

Exposure to natural sunlight helps regulate your body’s natural rhythms. Depending on where you live, the weather may still be too cold to spend much time outside, but you can at least open your blinds and sit in front of a window for a few minutes.

Work up a sweat.

Engaging in some form of cardiovascular exercise (e.g., walking, jogging, biking, swimming) in the late afternoon or early evening may help you fall asleep easier. If you don’t have the time or energy to spare, a hot bath can achieve the same result. Mingrone explains that first raising your body temperature and then gradually lowering it right before bedtime encourages production of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin.

Practice good sleep hygiene.

Roth Maguire says that anyone having trouble sleeping should ask themselves three questions about their sleep environment: Is it dark enough? Is it cool enough? Is it quiet enough? The final question is especially important for older adults since they are more likely to be awoken by nighttime noise.

**SOURCE:** <https://www.agingcare.com/articles/daylight-saving-time-health-156410.htm>

**Daylight Savings Time Transitions and the Incidence Rate of Unipolar Depressive Episodes**

Bertel T Hansen 1, Kim M Sønderskov, Ida Hageman, Peter T Dinesen, Søren D Østergaard

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**Abstract**

**Background:** Daylight savings time transitions affect approximately 1.6 billion people worldwide. Prior studies have documented associations between daylight savings time transitions and adverse health outcomes, but it remains unknown whether they also cause an increase in the incidence rate of depressive episodes. This seems likely because daylight savings time transitions affect circadian rhythms, which are implicated in the etiology of depressive disorder. Therefore, we investigated the effects of daylight savings time transitions on the incidence rate of unipolar depressive episodes.

**Methods:** Using time series intervention analysis of nationwide data from the Danish Psychiatric Central Research Register from 1995 to 2012, we compared the observed trend in the incidence rate of hospital contacts for unipolar depressive episodes after the transitions to and from summer time to the predicted trend in the incidence rate.

**Results:** The analyses were based on 185,419 hospital contacts for unipolar depression and showed that the transition from summer time to standard time were associated with an 11% increase (95% CI = 7%, 15%) in the incidence rate of unipolar depressive episodes that dissipated over approximately 10 weeks. The transition from standard time to summer time was not associated with a parallel change in the incidence rate of unipolar depressive episodes.

**Conclusion:** This study shows that the transition from summer time to standard time was associated with an increase in the incidence rate of unipolar depressive episodes. Distress associated with the sudden advancement of sunset, marking the coming of a long period of short days, may explain this finding. See video abstract at, http://links.lww.com/EDE/B179.

**SOURCE:** <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27775953/>