

## Daylight Saving Time's Hidden Toll: Health Risks and Safety Concerns Persist



**The Fifth Avenue Clock, located at 200 Fifth Avenue in the Flatiron District, March 2025.  
Photo by Ian M. Torres**

By Ian M. Torres

Daylight Saving Time (DST) began on March 9, 2025, with Americans “springing forward” and losing an hour of sleep. While the practice has long been marketed as a way to enjoy extended evening daylight, [researchers](#) are increasingly questioning its effects on public health and safety.

According to the American Journal of Epidemiology, the transition into DST is associated with a 17% increase in traffic accidents the following day. Health experts, like Dr. Michael D. Weinstein, a sleep medicine specialist at NYU Langone Health, warn that even minor disruptions to sleep can throw off the body’s circadian rhythm, leading to fatigue, mood swings, and reduced concentration.

“The loss of an hour of sleep, especially during the transition to daylight saving time, can have immediate and lasting effects on a person’s health,” said Dr. Weinstein. “It disrupts sleep and throws off the circadian rhythm.”

The consequences go beyond individual discomfort. A report by the [Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine](#) linked DST-related sleep disruption to increased risks of heart disease, depression, and workplace accidents. These effects are magnified among shift workers, airline employees, and others with irregular sleep schedules.

Luisa Zuluaga, a flight attendant, described the shift as “brutal,” adding, “It’s not just the hour we lose on the clock, but how it messes with our body’s rhythm. We often land in cities and have to adjust quickly, and it’s harder when the time change happens.”

Mark Melendez, an overnight warehouse supervisor in New Jersey, echoed the sentiment: “After daylight saving time, it feels like my body’s fighting me the entire night and impacts my ability to stay sharp.”

To be sure, there are those who favor DST. The extended evening daylight supports outdoor recreation and retail activity. The original intent behind the practice — first adopted during World War I to conserve energy — was to shift activity toward daylight hours. Some, including President Donald Trump, have voiced support for keeping DST permanent, citing consumer preference for later sunsets.

Still, health researchers remain skeptical. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has [called for the elimination of seasonal time changes](#), advocating instead for permanent standard time, which aligns more closely with the body’s natural circadian rhythm.

It’s also worth noting that the fall transition — when Americans “fall back” and gain an hour — does not appear to carry the same risks. [Some studies suggest](#) minor benefits, such as improved mood and alertness in the days following. However, the cumulative disruption from biannual clock changes remains a central concern.

With states like Arizona and Hawaii opting out of DST altogether, the national debate continues. As evidence mounts about the physiological and psychological toll of losing even a single hour of sleep, researchers and health advocates are pushing for policymakers to reconsider whether the benefits of DST outweigh its costs.