



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Better sleep boosts overall health and well-being
Sleep Awareness Week March 12-18, 25th anniversary

HIGHLAND— The National Sleep Foundation, which launched Sleep Awareness Week in 1998, says 45% of Americans report poor or insufficient sleep negatively affects their daily lives.

Sleep Awareness Week, March 12-18, highlights the importance of good sleep. With everyone moving their clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 12 with the start of Daylight Savings Time, sleep schedules may be affected.

Medical experts at HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland share that sleep is one of the pillars of a healthy lifestyle, along with a balanced diet and regular exercise. Sleep occurs when the brain and body disconnect from the senses, no longer allowing us to process information from the outside. In turn, sleep allows us to review activities and experiences from the day, which strengthens memory; gives our organs time to rest; allows our immune system to scan for infections and fight illnesses; and allows a child's or teenager's muscles to grow.

Additionally, sleep also helps us think more clearly and creatively and improves mood. It also keeps us safe by helping to avoid drowsy driving and accidents at work.

The term "sleep hygiene" refers to a series of healthy sleep habits that can improve your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep, including:

- Limit the use of electronics one hour prior to bed to prepare bodies and brains for sleep.
- Do not go to bed hungry.
- Keep the bedroom temperature cooler than the rest of the house.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol four to six hours before bedtime.
- If you don't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do a quiet activity without a lot of light exposure until you feel sleepy.

HSHS St. Joseph's medical experts share it's best to stay in a routine when it comes to bedtime and wake time, especially with kids. For those times where it can be hard to get kids to bed and you want to allow them to stay up a bit later every now and then, it is best not to deviate more than one hour from their regular bedtime.

Insufficient sleep can lead to health conditions such as irritability, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, depression and diabetes.

There are more than 80 identified sleep disorders, and sometimes, the cause has nothing to do with actual lack of sleep, according to local experts. Stress, depression, a change in family dynamics, a new career and other life adjustments can lead to trouble sleeping.

If you have concerns about sleep patterns, or difficulties falling or staying asleep, talk to your primary care physician to request a referral to HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital's Center for Sleep Medicine.

Learn more about St. Joseph's Center for Sleep Medicine's services by visiting stjosephshighland.org or calling 618-651-2736. For more information about getting quality sleep, visit the [American Academy of Sleep Medicine](http://www.aasm.org).

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About Hospital Sisters Health System

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high-quality Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states – Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](http://www.hospital-sisters.org) is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospital-sisters.org.