

PRESS RELEASE
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MEDIA CONTACTS:
Trevor Warner/David Heaton
(801) 525-5175/(435) 680-1316

Local Health Departments Launch Sleep Health Initiative to Boost Community Well-being

CLEARFIELD/ST. GEORGE, UTAH – March is National Sleep Awareness Month, and to highlight the importance of sleep, Davis County Health Department, along with the Southwest Utah Public Health Department, are announcing the launch of a comprehensive Sleep Health Initiative. This initiative aims to educate the community that sleep is a biological necessity, equally as important as diet and exercise, and is critical for the body and mind to repair and restore.

“The importance of sleep cannot be overstated,” says Dr. David Blodgett, Director and Health Officer for the Southwest Utah Public Health Department. “The quantity and quality of our sleep impacts almost every component of health, including mental health. About a third of the population probably has some sort of a sleep deficiency and we haven’t focused on sleep as a major determinant of health in our population, which is what public health is all about. It’s time for us to change that, and we hope these messages will be well received in the community.”

Sleep is the foundation upon which all other healthy choices count. A core component of the initiative is promoting well-studied practices, including principles of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I), which anyone can implement on their own through:

- **Sleep Hygiene:** Adopting good sleeping habits and creating an optimal sleep environment (dark, cool, and quiet), focusing on a consistent sleep schedule, creating a relaxing 30-60 minute wind-down routine, and avoiding sleep disruptors in the late afternoon like caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.
- **Thought Reframing:** Learning to identify and replace negative thoughts and worries about sleep with more accurate and positive thoughts to reduce stress and anxiety at bedtime.

“We’ve brought the two health departments together because we see a need to change the way we communicate with the public,” says Brian Hatch, Director of the Davis County Health Department. “We want to create messaging that will empower our communities to be intentional about their health habits. Sleep is a great topic to start with because it is one of the most powerful catalysts for strengthening a person’s physical health, mental function, and emotional resilience.”

Most healthy adults typically need 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. Infants, young children, and teenagers should get more sleep to support their growth and development. We encourage everyone to join us throughout the month of March and prioritize sleep! We want our communities to be intentional about their sleep habits, and make a conscious effort to prioritize their sleep in order to achieve better health and well-being.

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For more information/resources about sleep, follow Southwest Utah Public Health Department on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Website: swuhealth.gov/sleep.