Bones ache when weather changes? [1]

Alice,

When the weather changes my bones ache. Most of the time it's my legs and a couple of times it was my arms. Sometimes it gets to the point to where it hurts too bad I can't walk until the pain goes away. Is there something I can do or take to stop this? I'm 19 years old.

Achy-Breaky Teen

Answer

Dear Achy-Breaky Teen,

Ouch! Sorry to hear that you are in so much pain! It's unclear from your question as to what is making your bones ache, but some conditions that become especially painful when the weather changes may include rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, phantom limb pain, and osteoarthritis. Some people speculate that changes in barometric pressure, humidity, temperature, and sunshine are responsible for exacerbating the pain; this is why many complain about worsening pain when it rains. However, much more research needs to be done in order to understand these relationships.

Some general ways of relieving pain in the bones and joints (e.g., rheumatic pain) include:

- Taking over-the-counter pain medications, such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or acetaminophen can help relieve pain.
- Using acupuncture may help your brain and nervous system release pain-relieving chemicals into your body.
- Undergoing a procedure known as Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) can modify pain perception and lead to pain relief. TENS aims mild, electric pulses at nerve endings in the painful joint area under the skin. This blocks the brain from receiving pain messages from the rest of the body.
- Physical activity, if you are able, such as swimming, low-impact aerobics, and walking can reduce joint pain and stiffness, keeping you flexible.

As always, it's a good idea to check with your health care provider before beginning any of these
pain-relieving regimens. Your provider can also run tests to help diagnose the cause of your pain, if needed, and give you more details on how to alleviate the pain. When meeting with your health care provider, it may help to specify the circumstances that lead to pain. For instance, *does it only occur when the weather goes from hot to cold, wet to dry, or both? Have you ever broken a bone or sprained a joint in the area that now hurts? Does the pain ever occur without weather changes? Is there swelling or inflammation associated with the pain?* Having as much information as possible will assist her/him in prescribing a course of treatment that is most effective in reducing and/or eliminating the pain.

Here's to getting back on your feet and singing in the rain (or sun, sleet, or snow)!

Alice!

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