- Bones / Weather



WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

A little extra ache during weather changes is no reason to worry, but if you're still struggling with joint pain after the weather settles, be sure to check in with your health care provider, says Dr Armitage.

What's up with...

joints that ache when it rains

Here's why your knee or hip may be more accurate than your weather app.

BY KAYLA BLANTON

If you tend to tote an umbrella based on how your hip or knee feels, you'll be happy to know that this superpower isn't just your imagination. Though there has been debate for years over whether rain prediction based on joint pain (technically called barometric pressure pain) is a real thing, a review published recently found a significant link between changes in the weather and osteoarthritis pain.

WHAT CAUSES WEATHER-RELATED JOINT PAIN?

Barometric pressure is the force exerted on our bodies by the weight of the air surrounding us. Before rain, storms or snow, that pressure drops. "This can lead to an expansion of tissues and fluids within and around the joints, which may place additional pressure on nerve endings," says longevity physician Dr Anant Vinjamoori. Also, the inner ear detects pressure changes and notifies the brain about them, he says. "The brain can then signal to release neurotransmitters that make nerve fibres more sensitive to pain," he adds.

Changes in barometric pressure can trigger joint pain in people with arthritis; those with a history of joint surgery or trauma are also likely to experience it because of inflammation, joint damage and/or scar tissue, explains musculoskeletal medicine specialist Dr Mandy Armitage.

HOW TO EASE THE JOINT PAIN

▶ **STAY ACTIVE** "It's important to keep moving," says Dr Armitage. Low-impact exercise such as yoga and walking can help alleviate feelings of tightness. "If rain is forecasted, consider taking a walk as a preventive measure," she adds.

▶ **CONTROL INFLAMMATION** "At the root of most forms of joint pain is inflammation," explains Dr Vinjamoori. Be consistent about managing your inflammation through exercise, diet, over-the-counter pain relievers or supplements like fish oil.

▶ **SUPPORT YOUR JOINTS** Dr Vinjamoori recommends wearing a compression sleeve or brace on the affected joint, as it can provide support and help reduce discomfort. P

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