

Weather is considered a possible influence on a wide variety of health conditions. In other cases, weather factors may make existing pain worse.

Here are some health conditions common to runners/walkers that are associated with weather- influenced aches and pains:

Arthritis Arthritis is pain and stiffness in joints or connective tissues. Particular types include rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, gout and many others. Several studies over the past 20 years have found no correlation between arthritis pain and weather conditions. One researcher, a Stanford psychologist, said that because people naturally look for patterns, subjects mistakenly associated their pain with weather conditions. However, a study in 1960 at the University of Pennsylvania and a later Dutch experiment did find connections between increased arthritis pain and certain weather conditions. Weather factors that may impact arthritis pain include dramatic changes in barometric pressure and humidity. Cold weather can increase stiffness in muscles and joints.

Asthma Asthma is breathing difficulty brought on by constriction of the lung's airway passages. Research has shown a correlation between cool, dry weather and increased asthma-related hospital admissions. Spring and summer can also bring on asthma attacks, because of increased pollen and pollution in the air. Wind is also a factor, since it can transport those irritants over long distances.

Raynaud's phenomenon Raynaud's phenomenon is a condition in which blood vessel spasms disrupt blood circulation to the fingers or toes. The phenomenon, which turns one or several digits pale or bluish, can last minutes or hours, but generally does not cause tissue damage. Pain is uncommon, but there may be partial, temporary paralysis in the affected area. Emotional reactions and cold weather are two known triggers.

Sinus headaches Sinuses are the air cavities in the bones around your nasal passages. When sinuses become clogged or infected, the resulting pressure can cause a headache. Symptoms include pain in the front of the head and around the eyes, yellow or green nasal discharge and perhaps a fever. It's believed that barometric pressure changes may bring on headaches, if the sinus cavities are slow to equalize air pressure. Damp, cold weather can intensify sinus pain.

Be sure to consult your healthcare practitioner if any of your symptoms become serious.