

LESSON 5 Joint Pain



Conversation

Patient: Good morning. Doctor Smith?

Doctor: Yes, please come in.

Patient: Thank you. My name is Doug Smith.

Doctor: What have you come in for today Ms. Anders?

Patient: I've been having some pain in my joints, especially the knees.

Doctor: How long have you been having the pain?

Patient: I'd say it started three or four months ago. It's been getting worse recently.

Doctor: Are you having any other problems like weakness, fatigue or headaches?

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joint pain
knees
weakness
fatigue
headache
to feel under the weather
physical activity
to play sports
to have pain

Dialogue Quiz

Choose the correct answer to these questions based on the dialogue. Each question has only one correct answer.

Q: What seems to be Mr. Smith's problem?

- a. Broken knees
- b. Fatigue
- c. Joint pain

Q: Which joints are bothering him the most?

- a. elbow
- b. wrist
- c. knees

Q: How long has he been having this problem?

- a. three or four years
- b. He's been vomiting
- c. He doesn't mention another problem.

Q: Which other problem does the patient mention?

- a. He's felt under the weather.

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Reading & Discussion

A Word with the DOCTOR

by: Dr. John Winsor

Brittle Bones

IT'S QUITE RIGHT - old people should try to keep young. Try to keep up old interests. Even develop some hobbies.

But there's one luxury they should spare themselves: falling down. Slippery floors and rugs with ragged edges may be relatively harmless for youngsters, but should always be avoided for older people.

It's true that as we get older we fall more **clumsily** and frequently; but also our bones get weaker.

This worsening of the bones is because of changes in the bone structure. You could take some of the **struts** and supports out of a bridge, and it might

look just the same, and certainly no smaller.

But one would not suggest that trains could still go over it.

Thinning of bones is called **osteoporosis**, and it can happen for other reasons than old age.

It is more common in women than in men: the former most often at the time of the **menopause**. This unhappy weakening of our bones can also follow the regular and prolonged taking of certain drugs, especially **cortisone**.

Osteoporosis can cause a lot of odd symptoms. It is sometimes a cause of backache; or the patient gets a broken bone after a remarkably **trivial** accident.

In the elderly it is generally the long thigh bone - the **femur** - which collapses under quite a minor **strain** or fall.

If anyone has been told they have a thinning of bone (and this has to be proved by X-ray), they must take extra care not to do any heavy lifting or straining.

They need a diet with plenty of protein and vitamins. These last two are so often poorly supplied in the elderly, who sometimes live alone, and have no **stimulus** to do proper baking or cooking.

For a long time, it was thought that this thinning of bone at any age might be due to a lack of calcium, and patients were **stuffed** with it.

Big doses of calcium were disappointing, and a varied diet gives anybody enough of this mineral anyway.

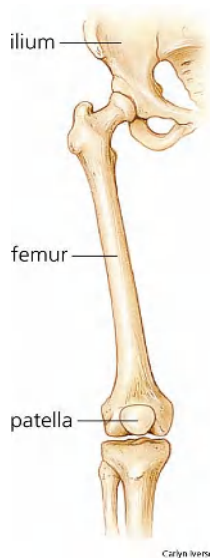
Finally, if grandma is changing houses after her **brood** has grown up, try to get her to accept a **bungalow** instead of an up-and-down. Fractures are much less frequent in the former.

There are now drugs available to help combat the problem, but taking **precautions** to avoid falls is always practical.

Vocabulary

- **clumsily** – in a clumsy (Lacking physical coordination, skill, or grace) manner
- **struts** - A structural element used to brace or strengthen a framework by resisting longitudinal compression.
- **osteoporosis** - A disease in which the bones become extremely porous, are subject to fracture, and heal slowly, occurring especially in women following menopause and often leading to curvature of the spine from vertebral collapse

- **menopause** - The permanent cessation of menstruation, occurring usually between the ages of 45 and 55.
- **cortisone** - A naturally occurring corticosteroid, $C_{21}H_{28}O_5$, that functions primarily in carbohydrate metabolism and is used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, adrenal insufficiency, certain allergies, and gout.
- **trivial** – ordinary
- **femur** - A bone of the leg situated between the pelvis and knee in humans. It is the largest and strongest bone in the body.



- **strain** - To injure or impair by overuse or overexertion
- **stimulus** - An agent, action, or condition that elicits or accelerates a physiological or psychological activity or response.
- **stuffed** - filled with something
- **brood** - The children in one family
- **bungalow** - A small house or cottage usually having a single story and sometimes an additional attic story
- **precaution** - An action taken in advance to protect against possible danger, failure, or injury; a safeguard

Reference:

<http://esl.about.com>

<http://www.englishmed.com/>

