Edema

Edema is a buildup of fluids. It is most common in the feet, ankles, and legs. This happens more as a person ages. It may affect one or both legs.

HOME CARE

- Raise (*elevate*) the legs or ankles above the level of the heart while lying down.
- Avoid sitting or standing still for a long time.
- Exercising the legs may help the puffiness (*swelling*) go down.
- A low-salt diet may help lessen the puffiness.
- Take medicines exactly as you are told.

CAUSES

- Standing or sitting in one place for a long period of time.
- The valves in the veins do not work as well as they should (*varicose veins*). This causes fluid to leak into the tissues.
- Eating too much salt.
- Injury, burn, or surgery to the leg, ankle, or foot.
- Sunburn.
- Pregnancy and your period (*female menstruation*).
- Some medicines cause your body to hold onto fluid (*fluid retention*).
- Heart failure, kidney disease, or liver disease.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You develop shortness of breath or chest pain.
- You cannot breathe when you lie down.
- You have more puffiness that does not go away with treatment.
- You have a temperature by mouth above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- You develop pain or redness in the areas that are puffy.
- You gain 3 or more pounds in 1 day or 5 pounds in a week.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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