

ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY EDUCATION



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EDEMA MANAGEMENT

Edema, also called swelling, can be caused by different types of cancer treatments and other non-cancer conditions. Edema may look or feel different for each person. Some examples include:

- Swelling in the feet, ankles, or legs
- Swelling in the hands or arms
- Swelling in the face or abdomen
- Skin changes—puffy, shiny, or looking dented after being pressed
- Shortness of breath

There are many ways to treat edema. Your care provider may prescribe medication to treat edema, but there are also many ways to lessen edema through diet and activity.

Ways to prevent or lessen edema:

- Wear loose clothing and shoes that aren't too tight.
- Prop up the swollen body part as high as comfortable when resting.
- Move the part of your body where edema is present.
- Limit salt in your diet. Avoid processed foods (e.g., canned soup), foods high in salt (e.g., chips, bacon, ham), and adding salt to your food. Check food labels for sodium content.
- Maintain proper water intake.
 - Drink 6 to 8 “8 oz” glasses of water or other non-caffeinated beverages per day, unless otherwise instructed by your healthcare team.
 - Ask your care provider if limiting your fluid intake is needed.
- Ask your care provider if magnesium supplements may be good for you.
- Ask your care provider if compression stockings may be good for you.

Contact your care provider if you have recently had surgery and think your swelling may be related to lymphedema (swelling from changes in lymph node drainage) or if you experience any of the following:

- Shortness of breath
- Changes in your heartbeat
- Sudden worsening of swelling
- Have not passed urine for a day or more
- A change in the look of the swelling (red, hot, or one-sided)
- Gained more than five pounds in a week

Additional instructions

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