

Summary Article: **edema**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(ĭdē'mə), abnormal accumulation of fluid in the body tissues or in the body cavities causing swelling or distention of the affected parts. Edema of the ankles and lower legs (in ambulatory patients) is characteristic of congestive heart failure, but it can accompany other conditions, including obesity, diseased leg veins, kidney disease, cirrhosis of the liver, anemia, and severe malnutrition. Edema is the result of venous ulceration, which is often caused by an increase in tissue pressure (increased fluid within the tissue) because of increased capillary permeability. A failing heart is often accompanied by edema because the blood backs up into the veins, venules, and capillaries, thereby increasing blood pressure. In severe cases of heart failure, the abdomen may fill with fluid; this condition is called ascities. Appendage edema is often treated by bandaging the area to relieve pressure on the skin and decrease venous pressure. More severe cases may require a surgical procedure that diverts the blood flow to healthy veins. The accumulation of fluid within the lungs is a serious complication of cardiac failure, pneumonia, and other disorders. The collection of fluid in the pleural space (within the two-layered membrane surrounding the lungs) can be the symptom of numerous infectious and circulatory disorders. Lymphatic obstructions may result from various surgical procedures or from certain parasitic infections. These blockages cause increased back pressure in the lymph vessels and interfere with movement of fluid from interstitial tissue into venule ends of capillaries. The resulting collection of water within the skull is a serious and usually incurable condition (see hydrocephalus). Since edema is a symptom, the underlying cause must be treated.

**APA**

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edema. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/edema>

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

"edema." *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, Columbia University Press, 8th edition, 2018. *Credo Reference*, <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/edema>. Accessed 20 Sep. 2019.