



## REDUCING EDEMA HEALTH PLAN

The following health plan is a list of natural interventions that have been proven to help reduce edema in the lower legs and feet. There are several references throughout this health plan to help you find more in-depth information on the website about different listed interventions. If you have questions about the Reducing Edema Health Plan, please use the “CONTACT US” form on the HOME page to ask for an appointment with a Lifestyle & Nutrition Consultant.

### NUTRITION HABITS THAT HELP REDUCE EDEMA

Here is a list of nutrition habits that help to reduce edema. As you read through the list, highlight all the habits you are already doing. Then go back through the list and put a check mark by the habits that you would like to try to adopt.

- Eat vegetables that are naturally low in sodium. It is healthier when prepared fresh without any added sauce or salty seasonings.
- Eat natural diuretic vegetables, including asparagus, parsley, beets, grapes, green beans, cucumber, artichoke, leafy greens, onion, leeks, garlic, and parsley.
- Choose fruits with high water content such as watermelon, grapes, pineapple, pumpkin, and cranberry juice.
- Eat foods high in antioxidants, such as blueberries, cherries, tomatoes, squash, bell peppers, and green tea.
- Eat more lean meats, cold water fish, tofu (soy, if no allergy), or beans for protein.
- Use healthy cooking oils, such as olive oil.
- Try to drink 8-10 glasses of water per day to flush excess salt out of your body.

### AVOID EATING FOODS WITH HIGH SALT CONTENT

- Avoid eating processed packaged grain products like commercial pancakes and

waffles, ready-to-eat bran and oat cereals, instant hot cereals, microwave popcorn, salty snack crackers, and pretzels

- Avoid eating canned vegetables
- Avoid eating frozen vegetables that contain added sauces
- Avoid eating processed meats like luncheon meats, sausage, bacon, hot dogs, ham, and canned tuna.
- Drain and rinse canned legumes like pinto beans, black beans, lima beans, etc.
- Avoid eating salted nuts and choose unsalted nuts instead
- Limit eating cheeses and butter milk
- Avoid eating convenience foods such as frozen meals, soups and rice, and pasta mixes
- Completely avoid eating fast foods and request your food to be prepared without salt at restaurants.
- Avoid eating seasonings that contains salt like garlic salt or celery salt
- Avoid eating high sodium condiments such as catsup, prepared salad dressings, and soy sauce.

### **IDENTIFY AND TREAT NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES**

There are a few mineral and vitamin deficiencies that cause the body to retain extra fluid, therefore increasing the severity of edema. If edema is a significant problem for you, your doctor should have your levels tested for these minerals and vitamins:

- Potassium
- Magnesium
- Vitamin D
- Thiamine (vitamin B1)
- Pantothenic Acid (vitamin B5)
- Pyridoxine (Vitamin B6)

#### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE DEFICIENT**

1. Follow your doctor's recommendation. He/she may tell you to take a supplement. If you have a severe deficiency of potassium or magnesium, you will be put on a prescription dose for these minerals.

2. Learn about foods that contain large amounts of the nutrients that you are deficient in. Go to <https://positivepatterns4life.com/thrive> and click on the *Eat Healthy* link which will take you to the *Eat Healthy* page. This page contains food lists for over 20 different nutrients.
3. If you need more help, use the "CONTACT US" form on the HOME page to ask for an appointment with a Lifestyle & Nutrition Consultant.

### LIFESTYLE HABITS THAT HELP REDUCE EDEMA

Here is a list of lifestyle habits that help to reduce edema. As you read through the list, highlight all the habits you are already doing. Then go back through the list and put a check mark by the habits that you would like to try to adopt.

- Get Some Support Hose ... Support hose or compression gear can prevent swelling, especially from being on your feet. You can find compression socks that come knee- or thigh-high or full-on compression stockings. These suckers are hard to get on, because they're meant to be pretty tight on your legs, but they can really make a difference.
- Elevate Those Feet ... Gravity is not your friend when it comes to edema, so elevate your feet every chance you get! When you're relaxing in the evening, prop your legs up on some pillows. Ideally, you want your feet above your heart. Take THAT, gravity!
- Make a Splash ... Swimming or even floating in water can help with swollen feet and ankles. The pressure from the water can help get things moving in your legs, and floating gives your circulatory system a break from gravity's constant pull. If you don't have a pool, check out local gyms to see what they offer.
- Exercise 5 days a week under the guidance of your health care provider.

### ALTERNATIVE NATURAL THERAPIES

- Perform dry skin brushing 1 to 2 times a week. To learn about dry skin brushing and how to perform it, go to <https://positivepatterns4life.com/thrive> and click on the *Detox Your Body* link which will take you to the *Detox Your Body* page. Here you will find information about dry skin brushing.
- Use grapefruit essential oil to help reduce swelling
  - Add a few drops of grapefruit essential oil to a warm bath
  - Add a few drops of grapefruit essential oil to a warm bucket of water and soak your feet
  - Mix a few drops of grapefruit oil with a carrier oil like olive or avocado oil and give yourself a little foot and leg massage
- Take an Epsom salt bath by adding a healthy dose of Epsom salts (1 to 2 cups) to your bath water

- Treat yourself to a professional massage

### HELP WITH CHANGING HEALTH HABITS

Changing health habits can be challenging. *Positive Patterns for Life* offers a variety of methods, skills and tools to help support you during your habit change journey. One of the most helpful tools found on the website is the *Positive Patterns for Life Goals Chart*. It has blank spaces for you to write in your new habits that you want to work on adopting. It has instructions to guide you on how to best use the goals chart and encouraging quotes to help you stay motivated during your health improvement journey. Make sure to check out all the resources in the *Changing Health Habits* section at the bottom of the THRIVE page at <https://positivepatterns4life.com/thrive>.

If you don't find the help you need in the *Changing Health Habits* section, schedule an appointment with a Lifestyle & Nutrition Consultant by using the "Contact Us."

### REFERENCES

1. Murry, Michael, Pizzorno, Joseph. (2012) *The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine*. (Third Edition). New York, NY: Atria Paperback.
2. Institute of Functional Medicine. (2004) *Clinical Nutrition a Functional Approach*. (Second Edition). Gig Harbor, WA: The Institute of Functional Medicine.
3. Williams, Sue, Schlenker, Eleanor. (2003) *Essentials of Nutrition and Diet Therapy*. (Eighth Edition). St. Louis, MO: Mosby.