



What is Water Retention?

Water retention is also known by its more medical term, edema. This is a condition that results when **water leaks into the body tissues from the blood**. In normal circumstances, the fluid is drained from the body tissues through the lymphatic system – a network of tubes throughout the body that removes waste and extraneous material, and empties it back into the bloodstream.

However, when fluid is not removed by the lymph system properly, it is **retained in the body tissues** where it causes swelling (edema). [Water retention](#) is most common in the feet and legs, but it can occur in the hands, arms, abdominal cavity (ascites) and around the lungs (known as pulmonary edema).

Types of Water Retention

There are two main categories of [water retention](#), **generalized edema** and **localized edema**. Generalized edema refers to swelling that occurs throughout the body while localized edema refers to the swelling in specific parts of the body.

Diagnosing Water Retention

The diagnosis of [water retention](#) is determined by a physical examination, the symptoms presented as well as medical history. Various tests such as blood tests, urine tests, liver and kidney function tests, chest x-ray or an electrocardiogram (ECG) may also be performed to determine the cause.

If [water retention](#) is a **symptom of a serious underlying disorder**, the disorder must be treated first.

Symptoms of Water Retention

The signs and symptoms of [water retention](#) include **swelling of the skin** that causes it to become shiny and stretched. Hands, ankles and feet are most commonly affected and the joints may feel stiff and ache. A bloated or enlarged abdomen, breathing difficulties and decreased flexibility of the joints (ankles, wrists and fingers) may also occur.

In addition, there may also be **sudden or rapid weight gain and skin indentations when the skin is pressed**. Symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain, redness or heat in a swollen edematous area should receive immediate medical care.

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

What Causes Water Retention?

Causes of body water retention depend on a **wide range of factors** including a high salt intake, as a reaction to hot weather, gravity, nutritional deficiencies, burns as well as sunburn and as a side effect of certain drugs. Pregnancy, oral contraceptives such as the pill, the menstrual cycle and menopause are also known **causes of body water retention**.

This condition **may also be symptomatic of other serious diseases** such as heart failure, liver disease, arthritis, allergic reactions, thyroid disease such as hypothyroidism, chronic lung diseases, malignant lymphoedema or kidney disease.

Help for Water Retention

Treatment involves rectifying the underlying **causes of body water retention**. A low dose of diuretic (water pill) may be prescribed to reduce swelling. In more severe cases of **water retention**, where the blood vessels are blocked or damaged, surgery may be required.

Natural Remedies for Water Retention

Natural and holistic treatments provide gentle **water retention remedies**. Use herbs such as Uva ursi, Horse chestnut and Buchu for their excellent diuretic properties. Taraxacum officinale (Dandelion) and Olea europea help to balance blood pressure, assist liver and gall bladder functioning and improve circulation.

Water retention remedies that use herbal and homeopathic remedies are safe and effective and not as harsh as prescription diuretics.

Tips for Preventing and Treating Water Retention

- **Water retention remedies** such as eating a well balanced diet and reducing your intake of salt will make a marked difference.
- Drink plenty of water so that the body is well hydrated.
- Exercise regularly, especially by walking, to help pump fluids back into the circulatory system.
- Limit your intake of dehydrating drinks such as coffee, tea and alcohol.
- Increase your intake of vitamin B supplements which are known to be beneficial for **water retention**.
- Wear support stockings or elastic sleeves to help push fluids back into your circulatory system and help circulation.
- Remember to elevate the affected area when sitting or lying down.
- If you are overweight or suffer with obesity, try to take the appropriate steps to lose weight and slim down to a healthier weight in a safe and natural manner.

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

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It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

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