

## Ankles, Swollen...

Swollen ankles result from an accumulation of excess tissue fluid. Flying, hot weather, standing for long periods, premenstrual syndrome, kidney infection, varicose veins, heart failure, pregnancy, and oral contraceptives can all contribute to this condition. It is also found in people with a protein or vitamin B deficiency. Very puffy ankles may be a sign of high blood pressure, or pre-eclamptic toxemia.

### Treatment.

Swollen ankles may be a sign of a serious internal disorder. If you suddenly notice unusual swelling, consult your doctor. Once serious problems have been ruled out, the following treatments may help.

### Herbal

Parsley is a natural diuretic (it helps get rid of excess water). Add liberally to your food, and take an infusion 3 times daily: pour a cup of boiling water on 2 teaspoons of the leaves and infuse for 10 minutes. Caution: not to be used during pregnancy.

### Hydrotherapy

Prepare two bowls of water: one with hot, but not boiling water, the other with cold (add some ice). Plunge your feet into first the hot, then the cold, several times, finishing with cold. This will increase circulation and reduce puffiness.

### Massage

Massaging the feet, ankles, calves and thighs can greatly assist in moving fluid out of the ankles. This can be done by a professional or a friend. Lie on your front while your partner massages the back of the leg from the ankle to the knee using slow firm sweeping motions up the calf, avoid the knee area and continue with firm upward sweeping strokes and kneading of the thigh muscle. Self-massage of the lower legs and ankles can be done according to the following routine:

Sit on the floor with your knees bent. Place your thumbs on the outside of the shin bone and link your fingers around the knee. Apply pressure to the thumbs, moving slowly down the outside of the leg to the ankle bone. Then move your thumbs around to the inside of the ankle and massage up the leg. Finally place your thumbs in front of your knee and your fingers behind, and squeeze the calf muscle. Work down the back of the leg squeezing and releasing. Caution: do not massage over varicose veins.