What Is Edema? The accumulation of fluid may be under the skin – usually in dependent areas such as the legs (peripheral edema, or ankle edema), or it may accumulate in the lungs (pulmonary edema). The location of edema can provide the health care practitioner the first clues in regard to the underlying cause of the fluid accumulation. Share Your Story Edema (or Oedema) is the abnormal accumulation of fluid in certain tissues within the body. What Are the Symptoms of Edema? Symptoms will depend on the cause of edema. What Does It Look Like?