

# Swelling May Be First Sign of Heart Disease

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My patient had a noticeable swelling in her ankles and legs. She also had a history of high blood pressure.

Her condition was once referred to as dropsy. Today, it is known as cardiac insufficiency or congestive heart failure. Both frightening terms if misunderstood!

When I say congestive

heart failure, I don't mean the heart is failing in the sense that it will stop beating. The heart goes on working but with less strength than is needed for good health.

**THE SWELLING** is caused when the heart's ability has become weakened by a disease of the heart or blood vessels. The heart muscle lacks strength to keep the blood circulating normally throughout the body.

As a result, some of the

fluid in the blood is forced out through the thin blood vessel walls into the surrounding tissues. Here the fluid piles up and you have congestion. The result is swelling, as in my patient's puffy ankles and legs.

This swelling can appear in many parts of the body but usually occurs in the lower extremities. Lungs can even become congested with this fluid causing shortness of breath.

**CONGESTIVE** heart fail-

ure usually develops over a period of time. It builds up as the heart muscle, already weakened by a heart condition, becomes increasingly strained. The signs and symptoms become more apparent as the effects accumulate.

Puffy ankles certainly do not necessarily indicate congestive heart failure. They may be caused from varicose veins and pregnancy. Even sitting or standing too long can cause swelling.

In any event, if there's a history of heart disease in your family, any swelling should always be reported to your doctor. Only he can recognize and treat the symptoms. Early attention is stressed so that the condition can be relieved or controlled.

For further information, I suggest you call the Los Angeles County Heart Association and ask for their free brochure, "Facts About Congestive Heart Failure."

# Robber Strikes Victim

An armed intruder held up the Ramada Inn, 4111 Pacific Coast Hwy., striking a woman employe on the head with a gun before escaping with \$170.

Victims told police the suspect, a male Mexican about 40, wearing baggy pants, was seen loitering in the hallway about 9:45 p.m. A woman clerk, leaving the auditing room to get more cash, said she was just about to question the man when

he hit her on the head with the weapon, knocking her to the floor.

At this point, two other persons in the office stepped out into the hall to investigate the commotion. The suspect forced all three back into the office, saying, "I want today's and yesterday's receipts, and put it in a paper bag."

The three victims walked ahead of the suspect to the inner office safe and gave

him the \$170 in an envelope.

The armed suspect then escorted the three to a restroom, instructing them to say there, and fled.

## Club to Meet

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