

How to Assess for Bilateral Pitting Oedema



Look and feel for a pit in each foot. Oedema in the feet only is classified as **mild (+) oedema**.

If there is no oedema in the feet, STOP. Nutritional oedema always spreads from the feet upwards.



If oedema is present in the feet look for oedema in the lower legs. Use the same technique as for the feet checking both sides. Bilateral pitting oedema in the feet AND the lower legs is classified as **moderate (+2) oedema**.



If oedema is present in the feet and lower legs, check the hands. Use the same technique. If there is oedema in the feet, lower legs, and hands this oedema is also classified as **moderate (+2) oedema**.



If moderate oedema is diagnosed, check for oedema around the eyes (periorbital oedema). Do not press on the eyes to look for pitting. If there is oedema around the eyes this is classified as **severe (+3) oedema**. Children with +3 oedema are at risk of mortality and are always treated in the NRU.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information and the drug names and doses quoted in this Journal are correct. However readers are advised to check information and doses before making prescriptions. Unless otherwise stated the doses quoted are for adults.