



Family Naturopathic Care

Natural Health Care for the Family

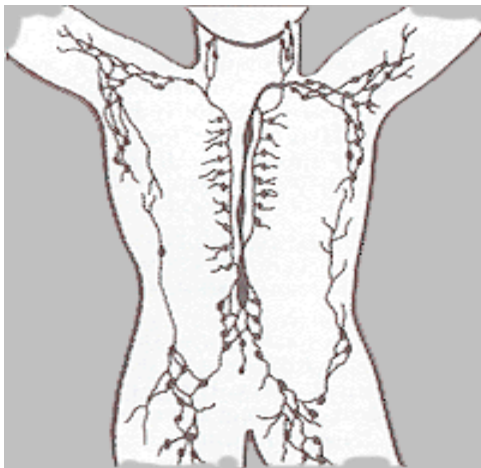
What is Lymph?

All the cells of the body are bathed in a clear, yellowish fluid. Through it, nutrients and oxygen pass into cells and waste products are removed from the cells. This fluid is continually renewed by the blood and drained away through a delicate network of lymph channels to the general circulation. Once it enters this system it is called lymph.

The lymphatic system is the “scavenger” of the body, draining away excess fluid, waste products and toxins from the cell’s environment. If it were to stop functioning we could not live longer than 24 hours.

At several points on its way back to the general circulation the lymph passes through glands which filter and destroy any foreign particles or make antibodies as needed. The lymphatic system is a key part of the immune system.

Thus optimal functioning of the lymphatic system is necessary for good health and a prime concern of any detoxification program.



The lymphatic system.

Courtesy of NIH/NCI.

Lymphatic Drainage

There are many ways to promote circulation of lymph to enhance overall wellness and in certain areas to reduce pain and speed healing.

1. **Water**-Drink sufficient water each day to flush toxicity from the body. Ideally, you should drink $\frac{1}{2}$ your body weight (lbs) in ounces. For example a 160lb person should drink 80oz (8x10oz) pure filtered water daily.
2. **Exercise**- Lymph channels run through muscle tissue and depend on movement and muscle contraction and relaxation to move the fluid along.
3. **Dry Skin Brushing**- Using a natural fiber brush, gently, with short, frequent strokes brush over all of your skin towards the heart for 45-60 sec each day before showering.
4. **Hydrotherapy**-This old naturopathic technique uses alternating hot and cold water to increase circulation to (hot) and away from (cold) a specific area or your whole body surface. Generally apply hot for 3 minutes and cold for 30-60 sec. for at least 3 cycles. You can do this with compresses, baths or sprays of water.
5. **Massage**-This is effective to promote drainage as well as muscle relaxation. Various oils can be used such as coconut or almond oil. Try different techniques but make your strokes more forceful towards the heart.
6. **Homeopathic Drainage**- Combinations of homeopathic remedies have been formulated to promote drainage and detoxification of various systems or organs of the body. These can be very effective at normalizing function of specific tissues and to enhance overall health.
7. **Comfortable Clothing**- It has been speculated and shown in epidemiological studies that the wearing of tight restrictive bras can contribute to increased risk of breast cancer. They restrict lymphatic drainage of the breasts leading to a buildup of toxins in the tissue. Underwire bras are especially harmful as is wearing a bra all night long.
8. **Castor oil packs**- Very effective at promoting lymphatic drainage and reducing pain.

Family Naturopathic Care is a seasonal newsletter published by **Dr. Janice Potter, B.Sc., N.D.**, a naturopathic physician practicing in Kelowna. To receive free copies register at **762-5100** or **www.drpotter.net**