

The Living Well Series: Engaging the Lymphatic System to Fight Inflammation

Your amazing body is completely equipped to clean and self-heal. But it doesn't always heal itself right? So why is that? It simply can't when the system that handles the cleaning task (the lymphatic system) slacks on its duty. The garbage doesn't get carried out, and the body shifts into an inflammatory state.

In today's post I am going to share the components of the lymphatic system, how they work, what might cause your lymphatic system to fall behind on the job and then share 3 things you can do to jumpstart that all important system back into action.

So what makes up the lymphatic system?

The lymphatic system is a complex network comprised of the following components:

- **Lymphatic Fluid:** the clear fluid around the cells that carries away waste product.
- **Lymphatic Vessels:** collect this fluid and send it towards the center of the body. There are 2x as many lymph vessels as there are blood vessels!
- **Lymphatic Nodes & Organs:** are the filtering stations and include Bone Marrow, Thymus, Spleen, Tonsils-Adenoids, Appendix, and Nodes. We are home to 400-700 lymph nodes, half which reside in our abdomen.

How does it work?

Unlike blood, which flows throughout the body in a continuous loop, lymph flows in only one direction—upward toward the neck. Lymphatic vessels connect to two subclavian veins, which are located on either sides of the neck near the

collarbones, where the fluid re-enters the circulatory system.

While the circulatory system can count on the powerhouse of the heart to move blood, lymph fluid is propelled through the lymph vessels by just the rhythmic contractions of teeny muscular units called lymphangions.

The reality is that you have twice as much lymph fluid in your body as blood. The lymph continuously bathes each cell and drains away the detritus in a circulatory system powered only by your breathing and movement. If the movement of the lymph stopped entirely you would die in a matter of hours.

Because lymph fluid literally has contact with every cell in the body, the effects of lymphatic stagnation are incredibly diverse.

How does it get stuck?

When the lymph system is compromised, chronic inflammation occurs. This stagnation is the result of the cumulative effect of diet, poor eliminating, and acidic pH levels. A diet that leads to digestive imbalances causes slowed elimination that then leads to an acidic environment of backed up waste. This waste is inflammation.

Stress is a multiplier on top of everything else and forces the body to manufacture and secrete excess stress-fighting hormones to boost energy. The waste products of these hormones are highly acidic adding further to the pH imbalance of the body. Chronic stress shifts the chemistry of the body to a steady acidic state contributing further to lymph congestion.



3 things you can do to reset your lymphatic system:

- Begin eating a whole food plant-based diet to alkalize the body's pH and encourage lymphatic drainage.
- Take a Gemmotherapy protocol that cleans the residue of metabolic waste in your body and supports optimal elimination.
- Move. Every day. Find a movement you can commit to—yoga, walking, swimming, pilates, cycling, rebounding—and then do it.

As adults there will be some cleanup work to do in order to get your lymphatic system back in full gear, but considering the alternative results of chronic inflammation— autoimmune disease, arthritis, diabetes and cancer just to name a few—it's a small price to pay.

Children on the otherhand can do it differently from the start. Parents can make choices early on that support their baby and child's natural healing capabilities.

Now that we've reviewed the lymphatic system and its role in cleaning your body, next week I'd like to revisit the topic of optimal daily elimination.