



# The Lymphatic System

The lymphatic system is an important part of the body's ability to protect against disease and heal injuries. It works to support every other system in the body, including the digestive, immune, nervous, elimination and detoxification systems.

The lymphatic system is made up of organs, tissues and vessels that carry lymph fluid throughout the body including the spleen, thymus, bone marrow, lymph nodes, adenoids, tonsils and gut associated lymph tissue (GALT).

Lymph nourishes and cleanses nearly every cell in the body and drains fluid back to the circulatory system. Its movement is mainly powered by deep breathing and exercise (muscle contraction).

The other organs of elimination, the skin, lungs, intestines, liver and kidneys, need to function well so the lymphatic system doesn't get overwhelmed with waste products. If the lymph system gets overburdened, lymph fluid backs up. This happens as a result of acute or chronic illness, lack of exercise or deep breathing, and toxic overload.

Symptoms of chronic lymph congestion can include: joint pain and swelling, headaches, frequent infections (lung, throat and sinus), worsening allergies and food intolerances, menstrual problems, breast swelling and tenderness, low energy, skin rashes and breakouts, digestive problems and mood changes. Over long periods of time, more serious problems can develop if toxins, bacteria, viruses, cancerous or diseased cells are not removed from the body through the lymph system.

There are a number of ways to support the health of your lymph and elimination systems including the following:

- Lymphatic drainage massage, lymph 'milking'
- Dry skin brushing
- Castor oil packs
- Infrared saunas
- Contrast showers
- Exercise such as rebounding, stretching, or aerobic exercise
- Reflex point stimulation
- Lymphatic drainage remedies – botanical and homeopathic
- Adequate hydration and a diet rich in healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals

Speak to your Naturopathic Doctor about which therapy would be best for you.

## Dry Skin Brushing

The skin is an organ of elimination just like the kidneys, lungs, liver and colon. When the skin becomes inactive because its pores are blocked, toxins and waste products accumulate in the body. Other organs of elimination, mainly the kidneys and liver, have to work harder to compensate for this and can easily become overburdened; when toxins and wastes build up, your risk of disease increases.

- Stimulates and drains the lymphatic system
- Improves health and texture of the skin
- Promotes detoxification and elimination
- Aids digestion
- Strengthens the immune system
- Stimulates circulation promoting oxygenation of tissues and organs

## Instructions

- Use a long handled, natural bristle brush or a dry loofah sponge
- Use a gentle, comfortable pressure and smoothly sweep the brush in small circles on the skin
- Start at the soles of your feet and work your way up your legs, your torso and your lower back
- Then brush your hands and move up your arms
- When doing your chest, upper back and neck, brush towards your heart at the upper left part of your chest
- Avoid the face, broken skin, rashes and any other sensitive areas
- Use a separate brush for each member of the family and wash brushes weekly

Dry skin brushing is most effective before your morning shower and/or before you go to bed. At least 5 minutes of skin brushing daily for 3 weeks every month is recommended to create a difference in your health.

## NOTES

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