

# What is Lymph?

## ■ Blood vessels and lymph vessels

The Lymphatic system is considered as a part of both the circulatory and immune systems, as well as a usually neglected part of students' books. The functions of the lymphatic system complement the bloodstream functions, as it regulates the balance of fluids in the body and filters the pathogens from the blood.

## ■ Lymph

Lymph is a clear, yellowish fluid present in most tissues of the body. It is created as a result of the filtration of the plasma. The plasma from the blood diffuses through the porous capillary wall into the tissues to deliver nutrients. After feeding the hungry cells on the periphery, the majority of fluid gets reabsorbed back into the blood vessels, while around 10% of the fluid stays in the tissue. That amount of residual fluid in the tissues is called the interstitial fluid. When the interstitial fluid gets absorbed into the lymphatic capillaries it becomes the lymph.

## ■ Lymph Nodes

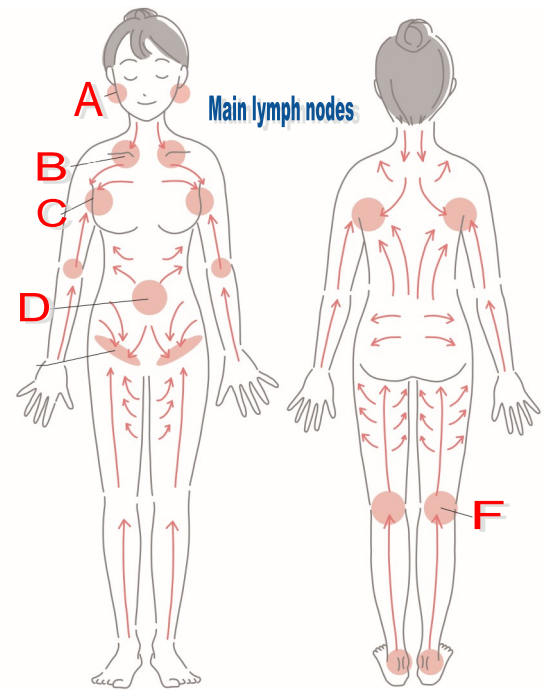
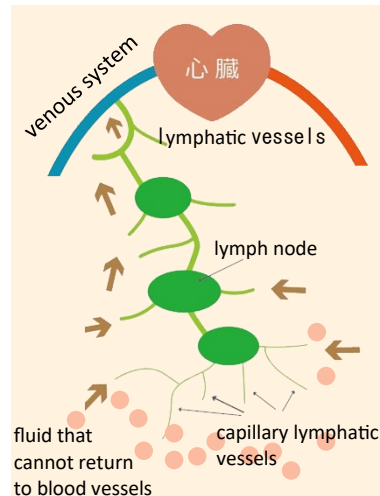
Lymph vessels merge with other lymph vessels many times before reaching veins. At the point where they meet, there is a bean-shaped lymph node (lymph gland). Lymph nodes are home to immune cells such as lymphocytes, which are related to white blood cells, and macrophages, which capture and process bacteria and harmful substances that are carried along with lymph fluid. The lymph fluid then flows as a clean liquid, but pathogens, foreign substances, cancer cells, etc. that cannot be completely disposed of remain temporarily in the lymph nodes. Lymph nodes are located in the neck, armpits, and groin and fight these foreign substances. That's why your lymph nodes swell when you catch a cold or get injured.

## ■ How does lymph flow?

It is said that lymph fluid flows when you move your muscles and breathe. Therefore, if you sit all day or don't exercise enough, the flow becomes poor, and if it accumulates in your lower legs, it will cause swelling of your legs, and if it accumulates in your shoulders, it will cause stiff shoulders

## ■ How to improve Lymph flow?

To improve lymph flow, move your muscles and joints. Pressure caused by muscle contraction and relaxation, changes in pressure within the chest caused by breathing, and stimulation from external massage can help lymph flow. Therefore, try rotating your shoulders and raising and lowering your legs at least once an hour while you work. If you cool your body, your muscles will stiffen and your body will not flow properly, so make sure to keep yourself warm. When massaging, use the entire palm of your hand. Lymph capillaries run shallowly near the surface of the body and do not have valves, so lymph fluid can be moved through lymph care from above the skin. Also, try to eat a well-balanced diet that includes vegetables, soybeans, and seaweed, and drink enough water to improve lymphatic flow.



**A:** Subauricular lymph node **B:** Clavicular lymph node  
**C:** Axillary lymph node **D:** Abdominal lymph node  
**E:** Inguinal lymph node **F:** Popliteal lymph node

## Tonsils are also lymph nodes

- The tonsils located at the back of the throat are one of the lymph nodes. When you catch a cold, your tonsils may swell, and this is because your tonsils are fighting pathogens.
- Lymph nodes are found in many areas that can be touched from the surface of the body, such as the neck, armpits, and base of the feet. A normal lymph node is less than 1 cm in diameter, and if it is larger than that and you can feel the lump, it is considered swollen, but in the case of a benign tumor such as a lump or lipoma. Therefore, you need to be careful when making your own decisions. If the tumor suddenly grows and is accompanied by pain, there is a high possibility that it is due to acute inflammation such as a viral infection, whereas if it gradually increases in size over several months and is not accompanied by pain, it is likely to be a malignant tumor. If you notice persistent lymph node swelling, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

## Improve blood circulation !

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