

UK Lymphology Clinics – Massage World – Study Room 8 Improve Winter Health with Lymphatic Flow

Winter is a time we should all be keeping our bodies extra healthy, with vitamin D levels lower during these shorter daylight hours bugs can thrive. There is, however, one system – the lymphatic system - which plays a vital role in our ability to fight infection and disease and would therefore benefit from some seasonal help with additional continued attention to eliminate infection effectively.

How we fight infection

The lymph system is involved in producing white blood cells (lymphocytes) that seek out, capture and destroy foreign substances – such as bacteria and other “invaders” – and subsequently tries to remove them from the body.

Slight tingling sensation underneath the tongue can be the first sign or symptom of an imminent cold. This is your lymphatic system detecting invasion and starting the fight against infection in the submandibular lymphoid tissue. A sore throat accompanied with a runny nose, coughing and sneezing is the way of lymph excretion of waste via the lungs.

With the mouth and lungs often the first contact entry point for infection rightly placed here are an abundance of lymphatics and lymphoid tissue. The mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue (MALT), is a diffuse system of small concentrations of lymphoid tissue found in various sites of the body and these include the oral passage, nasopharyngeal tract, lung and salivary glands. MALT is populated by lymphocytes such as T cells and B cells, as well as plasma cells and macrophages.

Tonsils are large clusters of lymphatic cells found in the pharynx. They are the body's first line of defence as part of the immune system. Although tonsillectomies occur much less frequently today than they did in the 1960s, it is still among the most common operations performed and typically follows frequent throat infections but also leaves you more vulnerable with less ability to fight infection.

If the spleen detects potentially dangerous bacteria, viruses, or other microorganisms in the blood, the spleen and lymph nodes create white blood cells called lymphocytes. We can live without a spleen, although people who have lost their spleen to disease or injury are more prone to infections. Scattered in the splenic pulp are lymph nodes, each containing an arteriole network. Lymphocytes released from the lymph nodules pass directly back into the blood stream. The splenic vein joins the hepatic portal vein and broken-down products of phagocytic activity from the splenic cells are carried straight to the liver.

Bone marrow is a key component of the lymphatic system, producing the lymphocytes that support the body's immune system. Formation produces approximately 500 billion blood cells per day.

Lymph nodes, around the joints of the body which are fighting infection cause pain because they are swollen with infection and an over stretched outer capsule with extra lymph fluid. If these areas are swollen around the throat and chin, regularly pressing in and around all these areas will help to keep your lymphatic system flowing naturally.

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Post infection

For some, however, sinus congestion persists, long after returning to work or school, resuming exercise, and getting back in to the swing of social activities. In these colder months, I have heard many of my clients say, “I was sick several weeks ago and I’m feeling much better, but my nose is still stuffy,” or, “I’ve mostly recovered from my cold, but I still have a headache and post nasal drip!”.

This is a clear indication they need lymphatic drainage. Underestimated by so many, it is a real immune-boosting hands-on therapy. Any increased movement of lymphatic fluid will help to improve the flow of the lymphocytes, macrophages and waste fluid in the lymphatic system and ultimately stimulate the body’s ability to fight infection even residual and niggling effects long after we have recovered from a cold or ‘flu. If you or your clients find “residual” after-effects of an infection which does not clear up fully and continues, the body needs more lymphatic flow and movement - it is a sign the system is struggling and continues to create symptoms.

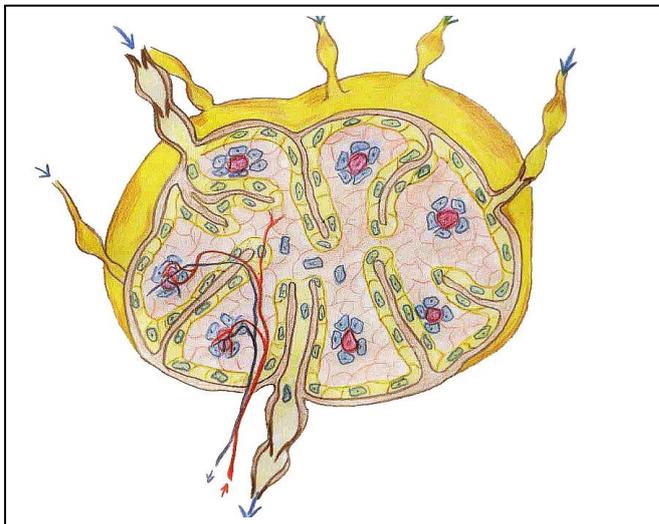
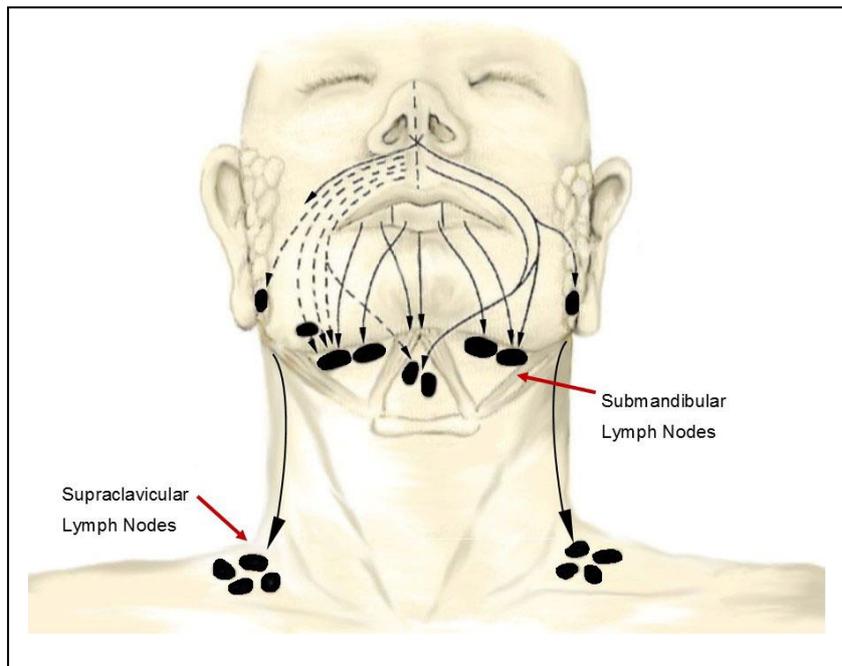
When performed directly to the neck and head, these techniques can help the sinuses drain fluid that may have become stagnant, decreasing headaches, sinus pressure and postnasal drip. Lymphatic drainage technique is painless and extremely effective – all reasons why it is one of my favourite methods to help clients dealing with stubborn sinus congestion and pressure. This can be exactly what is needed to get over the last stubborn remaining symptoms of that never-ending winter cold.

Summary

Discovered in the 1930`s manual lymphatic drainage originated from swollen lymph nodes and sore throats as a proven and effective method of natural healing to alleviate painful symptoms. Toxins and residual waste are a major contributing factor in the development of disease – virtually all disease. Lengthy recovery allows toxins to build up and remain in the body, eventually causing harm to some degree – from general aches and pains, to degenerative and autoimmune diseases, all the way to cancer.

Therefore, during winter I highly recommend regular lymphatic massage and self-lymphatic drainage - of head and neck lymph nodes to help speed up the removal of any residual waste; the body just needs assistance with this slow-moving infection fighting system for a much faster recovery and longer-term healthier body.

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Lymph nodes fight infection but will show signs of pain and swelling when they are infected.

Keep massaging them to bath infection with fresh lymph and speed up the healing process.