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Helping You Achieve Health . . . Naturally!

Spring 2023

Lymphatics

By: Jason King BSc. DOMP
Osteopathic Manual Practitioner

The body is one giant functional unit comprised of many systems and sub systems that work together to allow the body to run as efficiently and healthy. Examples of such systems would be the circulatory system, the digestive system, the nervous system and the musculoskeletal system. What about the LYMPHATIC SYSTEM?

The founder of osteopathy, AT. Still, paralleled the importance of the lymphatic system with that of arteries, veins and nerves. He considered the lymphatic system to be the life-giving centers and organs of the body.

WHAT IS THE LYMPHATIC SYSTEM?

The lymphatic system is comprised of:

- Vessels which carry clear fluid called lymph
- And various organs
 - o Tonsils in the throat
 - o Thymus in the chest
 - o Spleen in lower left portion of the rib cage
 - o Lymph nodes- contain clumps of specialized cells that play a very important part in the body's immune system
 - o Peyer's patches – lymphoid tissue found in the small intestine.
 - o Bone marrow



Lymphatic System

The Lymphatic system plays 3 important roles in the body. As stated before the lymphatic system contains nodes which help identify and target harmful agents circulating in the body thus providing a function in immunity. Secondly, the lymphatic system supports fluid regulation in the body and finally, it serves to rid of waste like hormones, bacteria, viruses, proteins, etc.

OSTEOPATHIC MANUAL THERAPY APPROACH TO LYMPHATIC SYSTEM

When specifically focusing on the lymphatic system an Osteopathic Manual practitioner is interested in the flow of the fluid in the body: does body have the feeling of a gentle free flowing spring or is it congested like a bog or marsh.

As previously stated, lymph vessels (and nodes) are found all over the body like veins and arteries. Refer to the picture above. To help support the flow of lymph to improve circulation and decrease stagnation it is beneficial to assess areas or junctions in the body.

Believe it or not respiration system plays a big role in pumping lymph throughout the body. The diaphragm, located in the chest cavity separates the chest from the abdomen. It is a thin like muscle that helps move air into the lungs as it descends during inhalation. The diaphragm also acts as a big pump of fluids. There are major vessels that pass through the diaphragm. When the diaphragm descends and ascends during breathing it helps massage these vessels acting as a pump. If the diaphragm is restricted in mobility it can disrupt the flow of fluids.

There are lymph nodes congregated in front of the hip, in the armpit and ducts located under each collar bone. Making sure the tissues (bones, tendons, fascia) in these areas is important to allow the extremities to drain

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properly and to allow fluid to pass into the ducts under the collar bones.

The tissues surrounding the lymphatic organs must have freedom to allow proper organ functioning. Even the fascia surrounding the small intestine is important contributor to a healthy lymphatic system.

WHO CAN BENEFIT OSTEOPATHIC LYMPHATIC SUPPORT?

Below are common symptoms where the lymphatic system may require some extra support:

- People who have frequent infections that can not be shaken (eg. Children with continuous tonsillitis, ear and sinus infections)
- Heaviness in legs and hands
- Recovering from surgery
- Chronic illness with very slow recovery
- Abdominal bloating
- Recurrent muscle spasms
- Maintenance and support of general health

Self Renewal for Spring

*By: Lisa Schneider, RMT
Registered Massage Therapist*

There are a few times of the year that symbolize an opportunity for renewal or reset. As the weather starts to warm, the snow banks begin to recede, and nature starts to transition from the great pause of winter into the first sprouts of spring, the equinox is an invitation to reflect on what is working in life, and what is not. What are you ready to let go of, to let melt away, and what do you want to cultivate? How do you want to take this time of year to care for yourself?

As someone in a caring profession, looking after others and putting other people's needs first comes naturally, but as my focus has shifted more and more inwards over the years, to ask myself 'what do I need', I am often led to new places of discovery. Self care comes in many different forms and is



very much related to the value, worth or priority that we place on our Self. What is it to be selfless, selfish or self prioritizing? How can we be there for others without sacrificing ourselves?

The concept of self sacrifice has been misconstrued as a noble act of humility. We as a society have placed an elevated value on those that give without considering their own needs first. While I think awareness of how this is a flawed practice is growing, there is still an embedded belief system that suggests that taking the time or resources to care for oneself is only possible if you are past the point of functioning properly in your life. Sometimes we wait for illness or an accident to take any substantial steps in our own care and sometimes not even then!

I encourage you as you read this to reflect on where you might be neglecting your own needs. What do you need right now in this moment? Is it a sip of water, some food, to readjust your position? Or maybe it's just a big, deep breath. Check in with your body- Does it feel relaxed or tight? Is there pain or discomfort? Do you even know what you are feeling right now? No matter your answers, it's ok. It's also ok to do something about your needs- get a sip of water or something to eat, shift your position, or perhaps book an appointment for self care. Awareness is what allows us to connect with the needs that we have so that we can then do something about them.

Spring is an opportunity to reflect- how do we need to take care of ourselves in order to nurture our own healing and growth? How can we put ourselves first so that we can continue to be a contribution to our partners,

children, families, and communities? In the spirit of renewal, I encourage you to renew your relationship with yourself, and take a step forward in your own healing journey. What are you ready to shed so that you can plant the seeds for your own growth and healing this spring?

The Smell of Spring

*By: Owen Wiseman ND
Naturopathic Doctor*

Spring is a time of renewal and rejuvenation, and for many of us, it even has a distinct smell. That smell is due to a compound called geosmin, which is produced by soil-dwelling bacteria, most notably *Streptomyces coelicolor*. These bacteria are naturally present in soil, where they help to break down organic matter. As temperatures warm up and the soils become wetter in the spring, bacterial populations expand and release more geosmin into the air.

Geosmin has a musty, earthy scent that is especially noticeable after a light rain. This is why spring truly does bring about a 'new' smell in the air. While geosmin may not necessarily be a pleasant aroma to all, it is an important part of the process of bringing renewed life to the Earth.

So next time you take a deep breath of fresh spring air and detect a musty, earthy scent, remember that it's coming from geosmin and all the hard work that nature is doing to bring us new life!

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Caring For Your Lymphatic System

*By: Dr. Colleen McQuarrie, ND
Naturopathic Doctor*

It's not nearly as glamorous as our heart, or as talked about as our brains, but our lymphatic system is an often undervalued and misunderstood part of our physiology. When it is doing its work without fanfare, and without challenges, it is shuttling waste for final removal from our body, as well as providing transport for a wide variety of nutrients, immune chemicals and cells between a variety of locations including lymph nodes, our spleens, the thymus, bone marrow and all of our other tissues. As adults, the majority of our lymphoid tissue runs along our digestive tract – this Gut Associated Lymphoid Tissue (GALT) is intimately engaged in assessing food coming in for threat, as well as conversing with the microbes of our gut microbiome.

We often talk about it with patients when the lymphatic system is found to not be working as it should – then it becomes quite clear how important it is, and how important maintaining its function can be. A lot of at

tention is paid to our lymphatic systems when we have had surgeries that have disrupted the small vessels of the immune system, as well as when we have contracted chronic infections that interfere with movement of the fluid within the system. Swelling and pain are the more obvious signs that a lymphatic system is not functioning as it should, however there are some more subtle signs that come earlier that should serve as a warning light in your self-care dashboard:

- intermittent swelling of fingers, hands, toes, feet, or ankles
- intermittent fevers
- swelling of lymph nodes of the neck, scalp, underarms, or groin
- feeling bloated
- joint pain that is moderate, and comes and goes
- feeling like everything is “tight” or “heavy”
- heightened sensitivity to changes in barometric pressure
- chronic sinus or bladder fullness/ congestion

Spring is a lovely time to learn more about and take more notice of our lymphatic system. So, how do we support our lymphatic systems and ensure that they are allowed to function as well as possible? First and foremost, we ensure that we have adequate hydration, and adequate sleep. Sleep is the time that we are most busy moving fluid from compartment to compartment in our bodies, and research is showing us that that movement is an essential part of repair and waste removal from any sight of injury. Moving our bodies regularly is equally important – our lymphatic system has none of its own muscles, and relies upon the movement of neighbouring tissues to help

sweep the fluid through the system. We can support good lymphatic movement with any form of exercise, but walking and swimming also support the state of the body (parasympathetic) that most lends itself to good lymphatic movement. Hands on therapies, such as massage, craniosacral, osteopathic, acupuncture and manual lymphatic drainage are a wonderful way to identify and remove any “blockages” or restrictions (think enlarged lymph nodes, tight fascia, scar tissue). Diaphragmatic breathing, rebounding and tri-planar vibration are also activities that promote good lymphatic movement. Surprisingly making a come back into the wellness sphere is hydrotherapy – the premise of using hot and cold contrast water exposure (whether in a bath, a shower or an application) – is part of what Naturopathic Medicine is rooted in – and it acts to encourage more pumping and movement of all of our circulatory systems (blood and lymph). Its impact on lymphatic health cannot be overstated.

Beyond supporting the movement of our lymph, we can also focus on eating clean, whole foods, in particular green vegetables, herbs and bitter greens. Parsley, sage, cleavers all come to mind as herbs to build into our routine as well. Botanical medicine and homeopathic medicines like Lymphdiaral are uniquely poised to directly support and treat a lymphatic system that is congested and not working well (some of my patients refer to Lymphdiaral as “Drano” for their chronically enlarged lymph nodes and congested lymphatic system).

Ready to learn more about your lymphatic system, or considering how to build some more care for it into your routines? We would be happy to support you!

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OIHC Welcomes Our New Associates

Catherine Hanson, RMT, CDT/CLT, Reiki Master

Specialty – Manual Lymphatic/Decongestive Therapy, CranioSacral Therapy, Reiki

Realizing society's growing awareness and need for alternative health care, Catherine was driven towards a holistic approach to wellness. Since 2008, she has been licensed as a Registered Massage Therapist with the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario. Also, a member of the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario, and the Lymphedema Association of Ontario.

Her expertise includes Manual Lymphatic/Decongestive therapy, CranioSacral therapy, cancer-care and support, rehabilitation, and Reiki. She creates a personalized treatment plan for each of her clients that will best lead them on their journey towards optimum health, vitality, and wellness. She believes in a holistic 'whole person' care approach.

Certified with the Norton School of Lymphatic Therapy in 2009 as a Certified Lymphedema Therapist (CLT), and Complete Decongestive Therapist (CDT), Catherine specializes in manual lymphatic therapy, also known as Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD), which is a safe approach to effectively cleanse the body's tissues. It is beneficial by having a detoxifying effect and can be used to effectively treat a variety of different conditions.

With the advanced Decongestive Certification, Catherine has complete and thorough training to assist with lymphedema prevention and/or management through: manual lymphatic drainage, compression garments - tips and referral, exercise recommendations - dos and don'ts, and skin care knowledge.

Catherine has a special interest in cancer survivorship, with work experience in cancer support and rehabilitation, volunteer work,

and fitness program involvement with Breast Cancer Action (BCA), and the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

Having studied through the Upledger Institute since 2009, and used CranioSacral therapy (CST) in her practice daily, Catherine has witnessed that CST can benefit everyone ~ children, teens, adults, and seniors. It is a light touch, whole-body treatment technique that works with the body's craniosacral system to support and nourish the central nervous system - improving overall vitality, health, and well-being. CST improves the body's ability to self-care and can produce profound, positive changes.

As a Reiki Master, Catherine is a true believer that with positive and healing intention, attaining wholeness of Mind, Body and Spirit is possible. With Reiki, she gently balances life energy chakras, to bring health and well-being to her clients.

Catherine maintains an active and healthy lifestyle with yoga, meditation, cycling, gardening, and cooking new healthy recipes with family as her favorite pastimes!

One of Catherine's favorite quotes: "When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy." ~ Rumi

Lisa Schneider, RMT, CST-T

As a Registered Massage Therapist, Certified CranioSacral Therapist, Somatic Bodywork practitioner, and Spiritual Coach, Lisa has worked collaboratively in the field of integrative medicine since 2007 in both Ottawa, ON and Vancouver, BC. A fierce proponent of patient-centred care, she believes that we all need to work together

(practitioners as well as patients) in order to create workable healing solutions.

Formally, Lisa is a registrant of the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario and a member of the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario, Techniques Certified in CranioSacral Therapy (CST) and SomatoEmotional Release (SER) through the Upledger Institute, certified as a Shamanic Coach and Practitioner in Sacred Trust with the RBCS lineage, BC, is trained in Visceral Manipulation (VM) with the Barral Institute, chronic pain management with Pain BC, and also in trauma informed practice and the Unity Model (Quinn, 2012) through the Trauma Informed Practice Institute, BC. She also has special interest and education in communication coaching, meditation, energetics of the body, ontology and spirituality, and how they relate to health, holistic wellness and disease.

Her commitment to continuing education, collaboration with other disciplines, general curiosity, and own personal healing journey, has helped Lisa develop insight into the complexities of chronic pain, trauma and dysfunction in the human body. Her true passion is empowering people to discover their own innate healing ability by redeveloping their intuitive connection to their own body, mind and spirit.

Lisa's priority is to offer a safe, affirming and non-discriminatory space, and welcomes people of all ages, abilities, sexes, genders, races, religions, beliefs, backgrounds and walks of life. She has particular interest and experience in working with members of the LGBTQ+ community.

For more information about the modalities Lisa practices, please visit her website: www.lisamschneider.com.

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