

Lymphatics 101

Your Lymphatic System is comprised of organs, lymph nodes, lymph ducts, and lymph vessels that produce and transport lymph from tissues to the bloodstream. This system can be viewed as our “garbage disposal”. The Lymphatic System moves excess fluid, proteins, fats, used red blood cells and white blood cells – especially lymphocytes – which are cells that attack bacteria (and cancer) in the blood.

An average healthy person can pump 1.5 liters of lymphatic fluid throughout their body within a 24-hour period. When the system is over loaded or compromised from surgery and/or radiation then it does not remove as much of the “garbage”.

Lymphatic Drainage Therapy (LDT) will stimulate the Lymphatic System to remove more “garbage” which will allow for improved blood circulation to the injured areas. The Lymphatic System is capable of pumping nearly 10 times its normal capacity when stimulated by LDT.

LDT differs from Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) in that the therapist has learned how to “feel” the actual flow of the Lymphatic System. When a lymph node is removed, the lymph vessels that had previously dumped into the lymph node, seal themselves off. All the fluid then builds up in the vessels and major swelling can occur. LDT can assist in rerouting vessels to functional nodes so the fluids can continue to drain.

How to locate a LDT therapist.

A therapist specializing in Lymphatic Drainage Therapy may also be a Physical Therapist (PT), Occupational Therapist (OT) or a Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT).

LDT practitioners can be located through:

Upledger Institute at www.upledger.com

National Lymphedema Network at <http://www.lymphnet.org>