

# The Lymphatic System

Body & health

The drainage network most people never learn, and why it matters.

A one-way network of vessels and nodes that collects fluid leaked from capillaries, filters it for pathogens, and returns it to the bloodstream near the heart.

**NODES**  
**~600**

**RETURNED/DAY**  
**~3 L**

**PUMP**  
**none**

- Roughly 3 litres of fluid are returned each day.
- It has no pump — muscle movement and breathing drive the flow.
- Lymph nodes filter the fluid and host immune cells.
- Swollen nodes mean the immune system is active nearby.
- The spleen filters blood and recycles old red cells.
- Blocked drainage causes lymphoedema — persistent swelling.

## LOOK FOR IT

Swollen glands in the neck during a sore throat are lymph nodes working, not the infection spreading.

Because it has no pump, movement is what drives lymph flow. Immobility causes swelling for this reason.