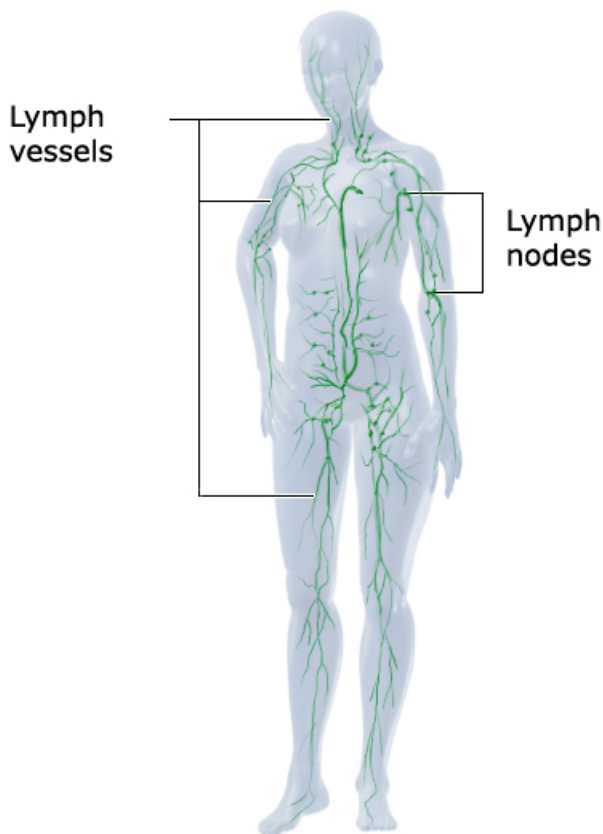


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The lymphatic system

Lymph travels around the body through a network of vessels in much the same way that blood travels around the body through the blood vessels. Whereas the blood carries nutrients and other substances into our tissues, the lymph vessels drain fluid from the tissues and transport it to the lymph nodes. These small gland-like masses of tissue filter out and destroy bacteria and other harmful substances. The bigger lymph vessels then carry the cleaned fluid back to the vein called the superior vena cava, where it enters the blood stream.

The lymph or lymphatic system is an important part of our body's system to defend us against infections.



Lymphatic system

Author: German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG)

Glossary

bacteria

Bacteria are micro-organisms that, unlike viruses, can exist on their own. Viruses, on the other hand, can only exist inside a living cell. Most bacteria are not harmful to people, and some are actually beneficial. Bowel bacteria support bowel health. However if they get into the urinary system, they can cause an infection there. Doctors prescribe antibiotics for illnesses where bacteria need to be stopped or killed off. Immunisation is also possible against some bacterial infections, such as diphtheria, tetanus or whooping cough.

Sources

The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG)

The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG) was established by legislation to provide evaluations of the effectiveness, quality and efficiency of healthcare services. This includes the assessment of medicines as well as the publication of health information for consumers and patients.

Evidence basis of our health information

Our information is based primarily on systematic reviews of the effects of health care. Systematic reviews are necessary to gain an objective picture of health care. In order to do this, a clear question is formulated. Researchers then find all the relevant studies that could answer this question. They then evaluate those studies.

You can find a list of the evidence and other scientific literature on which this information is based at [**www.informedhealthonline.org**](http://www.informedhealthonline.org)

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