This system functions parallel to the circulatory system and consists of lymph vessels, lymph nodes, and lymphoid tissues. The most important role of the lymphatic system is to absorb and transport large molecules (including protein and cellular debris) which are too large to be collected by veins and venous capillaries. This ***lymph fluid*** is then transported to*lymph nodes* that act as “filtering stations” in the body. In the lymph nodes, cells from the body’s natural defense system, called *lymphocytes,* help fight bacteria and viruses.

Networks of the lymphatic system are situated in several areas of the body with a specific drainage pathway for each individual area.

**Lympathic system**:

* **Axillary**: Located under each arm, these nodes receive fluid from the arm, chest, back, and breast tissue.
* **Inguinal**: Located at the bend of the hip, these nodes receive fluid from the leg, lower abdomen, gluteal region, and external genitals.

Deep Lymph Nodes Include:

* **Supraclavicular**: Located at the neck just above the collar bones, this important node group receives fluid from the head and shoulders. If indicated, the treatment of these lymph nodes precedes all other treatment.
* **Deep Abdominal/Pelvic Nodes**: The abdomen is richly invested in lymph nodes—they surround the organs and intestines. These nodes also receive fluid from the superficial inguinal area as well. Congestion in this area alone can cause swelling in the lower extremities, abdomen, and genitalia.

Lymphatic tissue is found in other areas of the body including the tonsils, spleen, intestinal wall, and bone marrow.

**Endometrium.**The lining of the uterus.

**Uterus.**Also called the womb, the uterus is a hollow, pear-shaped organ located in a woman's lower abdomen, between the bladder and the rectum.

**Ovaries.**Two female reproductive organs located in the pelvis.

**Fallopian tubes.**Carry eggs from the ovaries to the uterus.

**Cervix.**The lower, narrow part of the uterus (womb) located between the bladder and the rectum. It forms a canal that opens into the vagina, which leads to the outside of the body.

**Vagina.**The passageway through which fluid passes out of the body during menstrual periods. It is also called the "birth canal." The vagina connects the cervix (the opening of the womb, or uterus) and the vulva (the external genitalia).

**Vulva.**The external portion of the female genital organs.